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THE
ILLUSTRIOUS DR. MATHÉUS.

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BY

MM. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN,

*Authors of "Madame Thérèse," "The Conscript," "The Blockade,"
"Waterloo," "The Story of a Peasant," &c.*

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THE
ILLUSTRIOS DR. MATHÉUS.

CHAPTER I.

IN the little woodland town of Graufthal, on the borders of the Vosges and of Alsace, there lived one of those respectable rural doctors who still wore perruques, large square-tailed coats, knee-breeches, and silver-buckled shoes.

This worthy man was named Frantz Mathéus. He inherited from his ancestors the oldest house in the place, an orchard, some arable land on the mountain, a few acres of meadow in the valley ; and if you add to this modest patrimony eggs, milk, cheese, and, from time to time, a lean fowl, sent to the Doctor by the honest peasants out of the fulness of their gratitude, you will have the whole of Maître Frantz's income : it sufficed for his maintenance and that of his old servant Martha, as well as his horse Bruno.

Maître Frantz was a curious type of the old *doctores medicinæ, theologicæ* or *philosophicæ* of the good German school. His face expressed the gentlest placidity, the most perfect good-nature ; his ruling passion was metaphysics. The same pleasure which you, I imagine,

might take in reading *Candide* or *The Sentimental Journey*, he experienced in meditating the *Tractatus Theologico-politicus* of Baruch Spinoza, or the *Mondologie* of Leibnitz. He also made experiments in physics and chemistry for his own amusement.

Having one day put some flour of ergot-rye into a bottle of water, he perceived, at the end of a month or two, that his rye had given birth to a number of little eels, which speedily produced a crowd of others. Mathéus, transported with enthusiasm at this discovery, at once concluded from it that if eels can be made with rye-flour, men may be made with the flour of wheat. But after reflecting more on the subject the learned Doctor thought that this transformation must be effected slowly—progressively; that from rye would come eels—from eels fish of all kinds; from these fishes, reptiles, quadrupeds, birds, and so on, up to man inclusive—the whole by virtue of the law of progress. He called this progression “the ladder of being;” and as he had studied Greek, Latin, and several other languages, he set himself to compose a magnificent work, in sixteen volumes, entitled, *Palinogenesis-Psychologico-Anthropo-Zoology*, explaining spontaneous generation, the transformation of bodies, and the peregrination of souls; citing Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Isis and Osiris, Thales of Miletus, Heraclitus, Democritus—in short, all the cosmological philosophers, both ancient and modern.

He sent several copies of this work to the German universities, and what was more astonishing, a good number of philosophers adopted his system; titles were conferred on him of Corresponding Member of the Surgical Institution of Prague, of the Royal Society of

Sciences of Göttingen, and of Veterinary Councillor of the Stud of Wurtzbourg.

Mathéus, encouraged by these tokens of appreciation, resolved to bring out a second edition of his *Palingenesis*, enriched with notes in Hebrew and Syriac in elucidation of the text.

But his old servant—a woman of great sense—represented to him that this glorious enterprise had already cost him half of all he was worth ; and that he would be obliged to sell his horse, his orchard, and his meadows, to print his Syriac notes. She begged him to think a little more of mundane matters, and to moderate his anthropo-zoological ardour.

These judicious considerations greatly vexed Maître Frantz, but he could not help seeing that the good woman was right ; he sighed deeply, and kept his aspirations after glory to himself.

Now all this had happened a long time ago. Mathéus had returned to his habitual mode of life ; he mounted his horse early in the morning to go and visit his patients ; he returned late, harassed with fatigue ; in the evening, instead of shutting himself up in his library, he went down into the garden to prune his vine, to clear his trees of caterpillars, and to hoe his lettuces ; after supper, Jean-Claude Wachtmann the schoolmaster, Christian the *garde champêtre*, and a few gossips of the neighbourhood with their spinning-wheels dropped in. They all sat round a table, and chatted about the weather, Mathéus entertaining them with news of his patients ; and, at nightfall, he went tranquilly to bed, to recommence on the morrow.

Thus passed the days, months, and years. But this peaceful mode of existence could not console Maître

Frantz for having missed his vocation. Often, in his distant rides, alone in the midst of the woods, he reproached himself for his fatal inaction: "Frantz," he said to himself, "Graufthal is not the place for you! All those whom the Being of beings has made depositaries of the treasures of science belong to humanity. What will you answer to that Great Being when the time for rendering an account of yourself shall have come? Will He not say to you, in a voice of thunder: 'Frantz Mathéus, I had gifted you with the most magnificent intelligence, I had unveiled to you things divine and human, I had destined you from the beginning of time to spread the lights of sound philosophy; where are your works? In vain for you to try to excuse yourself on the plea of its being necessary for you to attend to the sick; these vulgar duties were not made for you; others would have filled your place. Go, Frantz, go; you were not worthy of the confidence I placed in you, and I condemn you to redescend the ladder of being!'"

Sometimes even the good soul woke himself in the middle of the night with crying out, "Frantz! Frantz! you are highly culpable!"

His old servant would rush to his bedside in alarm, exclaiming—

"Good heavens! what's the matter?"

"It is nothing—it is nothing," Mathéus would answer; "I have had a bad dream—that's all."

This moral condition of the illustrious doctor could not endure for ever; the repression of his metaphysical tendencies was too severe.

One evening, as he was returning to the village along the bank of the Zinsel, he met one of those hawkers of

bibles and almanacs who make their way even to the tops of the mountains to sell their wares. Maître Frantz had not lost the taste for worm-eaten books ; he dismounted, and looked over the hawker's stock. By the merest chance this one possessed a copy of the *Anthropo-Zoology*, which he had not been able to dispose of for fifteen years ; and, seeing Mathéus regard this work with a thoroughly paternal love, he did not fail to tell him that nothing sold better than that, that everybody wanted to read this book, that no more copies were to be had, and that in consequence of this great demand the work was every day becoming more rare.

Maître Frantz's heart beat strongly, his hand trembled.

“ Oh, Great Demiourgos ! Great Demiourgos ! ” he murmured to himself ; “ here I recognise thine infinite wisdom. Out of the mouths of the simple thou recallest the sages to their duties ! ”

Maître Frantz returned to Graufthal in a state of extreme agitation : he went about vaguely ; a crowd of incoherent ideas pressed upon his mind. Should he go and live at Goettingen ? Should he go to Prague ? Ought he to reprint the *Palingenesis* with new notes ? Or ought he to apostrophise the age on its indifference to the subject of anthropo-zoology ?

All this tormented, distressed him ; but the means appeared to him too long, and his impatience admitting of no delay, he resolved to follow the example of the old prophets—to go forth himself into the universe and preach his own doctrine.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Frantz Mathéus had formed the generous resolve of illuminating the world with his own light, a strange and undefinable calm entered into the depths of his soul. It was the eve of St. Boniface, towards six o'clock in the evening; a splendid sun lit the valley of Graufthal, and relieved the motionless branches of the tall firs against the clear sky.

The good man was seated in the old arm-chair of his forefathers, near the small casement, his eyes wandering over the silent little town stretched at the foot of the misty mountains.

Peasants were mowing grass on the skirt of the forest; women, old Martha herself amongst them, armed with rakes, were turning the hay and singing old country airs.

The Zinsel murmured softly in its pebbly bed; a low hum filled the air; long files of ducks were taking their way up the stream, and every now and then raised their nasal cry; fowls were sleeping under the shadow of walls, on the shafts of carts and implements of labour; chubby children were romping and amusing themselves on the thresholds of cottages; and watchdogs, their muzzles between their paws, gave themselves up to the overpowering heat of the day.

This calm scene insensibly touched the heart of

Mathéus ; silent tears stole down his venerable cheeks ; he took his already grey head between his hands, and, with his elbows on the window-ledge, wept like a child.

A crowd of tender recollections rose to his mind. That rustic dwelling, the abode of his father—this little garden, the trees of which he had cultivated, every plant in which he had sown—this old oak furniture, embrowned by time—all reminded him of his peaceful happiness, his habits, his friends, his infancy ; and it almost seemed as if each of those inanimate objects appealed to him in touching accents not to desert them—reproached him for his ingratitude, and commiserated him beforehand on his loneliness in the world. And the heart of Frantz Mathéus echoed all these voices, and at every recollection fresh tears streamed more abundantly from his eyes.

Then, when he thought of the poor little town of which he was in some sort the only providence ; when, through his tears, he looked at each of the little doors at which he had so often stopped to speak words of consolation, to distribute help, and to give ease to human sufferings ; when he remembered all the hands that had pressed his, all the looks of affection and love that had blessed him—then he felt the weight of his resolution almost more than he could bear, and dared not think of the moment of his departure.

“ What will Christian Schmidt say,” he thought, “ whose wife I cured of a cruel malady, and who does not know how sufficiently to show his gratitude to me ? What will Jacob Zimmer say, whom I saved from ruin, when he had not a farthing left to rebuild his barn ? What will old Martha say, who has taken care of me

with a mother's tenderness, who brought me my coffee and cream every morning, who mended my breeches and stockings, and who would never go to bed till she had covered me up and pulled my cotton nightcap down to my ears? Poor Martha!—poor, poor, good old Martha! Only yesterday she was knitting me warm under-stockings, and putting away the dozen new shirts she had spun for me with her own hands! And what will Georges Brenner say, on hearing that his wood will be burnt by somebody else? He'll be very angry; he's a man of the canine race, who will not listen to reason, and will not let me go."

Such were the reflections of Frantz Mathéus; and if his resolution had not been firm, indestructible, so many obstacles would have overthrown his courage.

But as the sun went down towards the Falberg, and the coolness of night spread itself over the bottom of the valley, he felt calmness and serenity revive within his soul; his eyes rose lovingly towards heaven, the last rays of twilight illuminating his inspired brow; he might have been thought to be praying silently. Frantz Mathéus was thinking of the incalculable consequences of his system for the happiness of future men, and nothing but Martha's arrival could interrupt the flow of his sublime meditations.

He heard his old servant go into the kitchen, put away her rake behind the door, and begin to take down plates and dishes preparatory to supper.

These sounds, familiar to his ear; Martha's tread, which he would have recognised among a thousand; the hum of the little town, the song of the men and women haymakers returning merrily home, the small windows in which lights were appearing one by one—all this

once more affected the good man ; he dared not stir from his seat ; with joined hands and head bent down, he listened to these intermingled sounds. “ Listen to these beloved sounds,” he said to himself, “ for perhaps you may never hear them again !—never !”

Suddenly Martha opened the room-door. She could not see her master, and called out—

“ Are you there, Doctor ?”

“ Yes, Martha, I am here,” answered Mathéus, in a trembling voice.

“ Bless us ! why do you sit in the dark like that ? I’ll run and get a light.”

“ There is no need. I would rather speak to you so. I would rather tell you—— Come—come here and listen to me.”

Mathéus could not articulate another word ; his heart beat violently, and he thought : “ If I were to see her face when I tell her what I must tell her—it would be more than I could bear.”

Martha felt by the Doctor’s tone of voice that she was going to hear distressing news, and her knees bent under her.

“ What is the matter with you, Doctor ?” she said ; “ your voice trembles !”

“ It is nothing—it is nothing, my good, my dear Martha !—it is nothing. Sit down—here, near me ; I have something to tell you——”

But again the words died upon his lips.

After a few moments’ silence, he went on—

“ It will distress you, but it must be done.”

The old servant in great anxiety hurried away to fetch the lamp ; when she returned she saw Mathéus looking as pale as death.

“ You are ill, Doctor,” she cried ; “ you are in pain, I am sure !”

But the illustrious Doctor had had time to collect his thoughts. A luminous idea flashed upon his mind—

“ If I can succeed in convincing Martha, all will go well, and it will clearly prove besides that entire humanity will be unable to resist the eloquence of Frantz Mathéus.” Full of this conviction, he rose.

“ Martha,” he said, “ look me full in the face.”

“ I’m looking at you, Doctor,” replied the bewildered old servant.

“ Well, you see before you Frantz Mathéus, Doctor of Medicine of the Faculty of Strasbourg, Corresponding Member of the Surgical Institute of Prague and of the Royal Society of Sciences of Goettingen, Veterinary Councillor of the Stud of Wurtzbourg, and formerly, by a truly frightful concourse of circumstances, Surgeon-Major to the band of Schinderhannes.”

Here the Doctor paused, to allow Martha time to appreciate the full magnificence of these titles. He then went on—

“ Frantz Mathéus, sole inventor of the famous psychologico-anthropo-zoological doctrine, which has shaken the world, astounded ignorance, exasperated envy, and struck the universe with admiration ! Frantz Mathéus, to whom have been entrusted the destinies of humanity and of cosmological philosophy, founded on the three kingdoms of nature—vegetable, animal, and human ! Frantz Mathéus, who for fifteen years has languished in shameful ease, and whose indignant conscience every day reproaches him with having abandoned to the hazard of systems, to the sophisms of schools, and to

the disastrous influence of prejudice, the future of humankind!"

Martha trembled in every limb; never had she seen her master in such a state of enthusiasm.

The illustrious philosopher, on his side, marked with satisfaction his servant's bewilderment. He went on with redoubled eloquence—

"How long, Mathéus, will you take upon yourself this frightful responsibility? How long will you forget the sublime mission imposed on you by genius? Do you not hear the voices calling you? Do you not know that, to mount the ladder of being, one must suffer, and that to suffer is to merit? Ignorance and sophistry raise themselves in vain against you? March—march! Frantz Mathéus! Sow on your way the beneficent germs of anthropo-zoology, and your glory, immortal as truth, shall grow from age to age, sheltering beneath its evergreen foliage the future generations! It is for this purpose, Martha, that you must pack up my valise this evening; tell Nickel, the cobbler, to mend Bruno's saddle; give a double feed of oats to the poor beast; and I shall set off to-morrow before daybreak, to preach my doctrine to the universe."

At this conclusion Martha was very nearly tumbling backwards; she thought her master had gone out of his senses.

"What, Doctor!" she stammered; "you want to leave us—to abandon us? Oh, no! it's impossible! You—so good—who have none but friends in the place! You can't think of such a thing!"

"It must be so," replied Mathéus stoically—"it must be so; it is my duty."

Martha said no more, and appeared to resign her-

self. As usual, she laid the cloth and served up the Doctor's supper. That day it was a fowl with rice, and filberts for dessert ; Mathéus—of the family of the nibblers—was very fond of nuts. His servant redoubled her usual attentions ; she herself carved the fowl, and assisted him to the most delicate morsels ; she refilled his glass to the brim, and looked at him with a melancholy eye, as if in pity.

When the meal was finished, she conducted Mathéus into his little bedroom, turned the bedclothes down herself, and satisfied herself that his cotton nightcap was under the pillow.

All was white, clean, neatly arranged ; the china washhand-basin on the stand, the ewer of fresh water in the basin, the little glass shining between the two windows ; the bookcase, containing the *Anthropo-Zoology*, in sixteen volumes, some Latin authors, and books of medicine carefully dated ; everywhere might be recognised the attentive care of the vigilant housewife.

After having convinced herself that everything was in its place, Martha opened the door and wished her master “good night” in a voice so touching that the illustrious philosopher felt heartrent. He would have liked to have thrown himself upon the excellent woman's neck, and said to her, “Martha—my good Martha—you cannot imagine how much Frantz Mathéus admires your courage and resignation. He predicts for you the highest future destiny !” That is what he would have liked to have said ; but fear of a too pathetic scene calmed his deep emotion, and he contented himself by again gently enjoining her to give a double feed of oats to Bruno, and to wake him at daybreak.

The good woman went slowly away, and the illus-

trious Doctor Mathéus, happy in this first triumph, lay down in his feather-bed.

For a long time he could not close an eye ; he recapitulated all the events of this memorable day, and the sublime consequences of the anthropo-zoological system ; images, invocations, prosopopoeia, linked themselves one with another in his luminous mind, until at last his eyelids drooped, and he sank into a profound sleep.

CHAPTER III.

THE pale rays of dawn were dimly lighting the little town of Graufthal when Frantz Mathéus opened his eyes; the red cock of his neighbour Christina Bauer awoke him with its matutinal crow at the moment when Socrates and Pythagoras were placing crowns of imperishable flowers upon his head.

This happy omen put him immediately into a good humour. He pulled on his breeches, and opened his window to breathe the free air. But judge of his surprise when he discovered, a few steps from the door, Jean-Claude Wachtmann, the schoolmaster, pacing to and fro, a paper in his hand, and making truly extraordinary gestures.

What increased the Doctor's astonishment was to see that Jean-Claude had on his large Sunday coat, and that he wore his immense three-cornered hat and silver-buckled shoes.

“What are you doing here so early in the morning, Maître Claude?” he asked.

“I am reading,” replied the schoolmaster gravely, without disturbing himself; “I am reading a piece of eloquence composed by myself—something to soften the heart of a rock!”

The gesture, the attitude, and the imposing look of

Jean-Claude portended trouble to the soul of Frantz Mathéus ; he began to conceive vague uneasiness.

“ Maître Claude,” he said in a faltering voice, “ I am not unaware of your talents and remarkable learning ; will you have the kindness to let me look at this discourse ?”

“ You shall hear it, Doctor—you shall hear it, when the others are assembled,” replied Claude Wachtmann, putting his paper into the large pocket of his black coat ; “ it is before everybody I wish to read this remarkable work, the fruit of my studies and of my profound sorrow.”

The schoolmaster’s look was august as he pronounced these words, and Frantz Mathéus felt himself turn pale.

“ Martha ! Martha !” he murmured to himself, “ what have you done ? Not content with shaking my courage by your tears, you still further take advantage of my being asleep to raise the village against me !”

Alas ! the illustrious Doctor had not deceived himself ; his perfidious servant had given the note of warning, and the report of his departure had spread far and wide.

Georges Brenner, the woodman, soon made his appearance. He cast a savage look towards the Doctor’s house, and clapped himself down on the stone bench by the door ; then came Christian, the thresher, every feature expressing dejection ; then Käte Schmidt, the miller’s sister ; then all the village, women, children, old folks, as if to a funeral.

Mathéus, hidden behind his windows, shuddered on seeing the gathering storm. His first idea was to confront this ignorant crowd, entirely destitute of the

simplest notions on the subject of the three kingdoms of nature—to make them blush for their narrow selfishness, by demonstrating in the most evident manner that Frantz Mathéus owed himself to the universe, and that his sublime genius could not bury itself at Graufthal without committing a terrible crime towards humankind; but afterwards his natural prudence suggested to his mind a less imposing project, though one that was quite legitimate, and requiring tact for its execution: he resolved to go softly into the kitchen, from the kitchen into the barn, then to saddle Bruno and escape by the back-door.

This ingenious design made the good man smile; he pictured to himself Maître Claude's stupefaction in thinking to catch the hare in its form when it was already trotting far away over the mountain.

Hastily he put on a pair of new woollen stockings, his big brown overcoat, and his heavy riding-boots, furnished with spurs like clock-wheels; then he put on his wide-brimmed hat, which gave him a venerable appearance, and opened his door with infinite caution. But, in crossing the kitchen, he fortunately recollected the *Anthropo-Zoology*, and returned in haste to put the synopsis in his pocket.

The illustrious Doctor regretted not being able to take with him the sixteen quarto volumes, but he carried in his head all the developments of that great work, as well as the notes, corollaries, references, and a mass of unpublished and curious observations, the results of his later studies.

At last, after a farewell look at his cherished library, he stole, all in a tremble, into the stable, like a captive escaping from the hands of infidels.

Broad daylight already made its way in through the dull panes of a skylight, and the sight of Bruno revived his courage.

Bruno was a vigorous horse, with massive neck and shoulders, wide chest ; short, solid, thick-set, with firm hocks ; in a word, the worthy and robust bearer of the country Doctor.

On seeing Maître Mathéus go by on Bruno, every one might have said—

“ There go the very best beast and the greatest philosopher in the country.”

Frantz Mathéus saw, by his shining and well-rounded paunch, that he had eaten his double feed of oats ; therefore, without dissertation of any sort, he put on his large leather saddle, in one of the holsters of which he placed the copy of his synopsis ; then, with a precipitation which proved his great desire to escape Claude Wachtmann’s eloquence, he led his horse into the barn, raised the bar, and opened the folding-door.

But the anger and exasperation of the Doctor are not to be imagined when he saw the whole village gathered about the door, Jean-Claude Wachtmann at the head, Hubert the blacksmith on his right, and Christian Bauer on his left. His venerable face turned suddenly red, and his habitually calm and meditative eyes shot forth the lightnings of a noble indignation.

He mounted abruptly into the saddle, crying—

“ Make way !”

But the crowd did not stir, and Maître Frantz even thought he could perceive a mocking smile on all their lips, as if defying him to go.

“ Come, my friends, make way for me,” he said, in a

less decided tone ; “ I am going to see my patients in the mountain.”

This falsehood, so contrary to his system, pained him ; yet the peasants, who knew his goodness, took no heed of it.

“ We know all,” cried fat Catherine, pretending to shed tears in her apron, “ we know all ! Martha has told us all—you want to leave the village.”

Mathéus was going to reply, when Jean-Claude Wachtmann, with a single wave of his hand, imposed silence on everybody ; he then planted himself in front of the Doctor to overpower him by his looks, majestically drew forth his spectacles from their case, pressed them down upon his big nose, smoothed out his paper with a grave air, once more looked around him to command the attention of the crowd, and began to read the following masterpiece in a solemn tone, pausing at the commas and full-stops, and gesticulating like a very preacher :—

“ When the great Antiochus, Emperor of Nineveh and Babylon, formed the ambitious design of departing from his kingdom to make the conquest of the five quarters of the world, with the guilty view of covering himself with laurels, his friend Cineas said to him : ‘ Great Antiochus, worthy scion of so many kings, Emperor of Babylon, of Nineveh, and of Mesopotamia, a country situate between the Tigris and the Euphrates — magnanimous and invincible warrior ! deign to lend an ear to the touching words of your friend Cineas, a man of intelligence, who prostrates himself before you, and who can give you none but the best advice. What is glory, Antiochus ? — what is glory ? An empty smoke, like a dense shadow that

has not the least body to support it. Glory!—the scourge of humanity, bearing with it plague, war, famine, shame and desolation! What! illustrious Antiochus, would you abandon your wife, an august queen full of virtues, and your poor children, who wring their hands and cover themselves with ashes? What! can you have a soul so hardened and perverse as to plunge into an abyss of desolation this people that adores you, these nubile women, these mature men, these infants at the breast, and these old men with locks white as the snow of Mount Ida, of whom you are as it were the father! You hear their cries—their tears—their——”

He could not proceed any further; the crowd, as with one assent, suddenly burst into tears; the women sobbed, the men sighed, the children squalled, and the whole house was filled with lamentations.

At that moment Claude Wachtmann raised himself upon the point of his toes, and moved his big nose from right to left to assure himself that each one was doing his duty. He caught sight of Jacques Burrus's little incorrigible, who, having climbed upon the barn-ladder, was holding old Mathéus' grey cat by the tail and making the poor brute squall dolefully. He made a sign with his finger to the young rascal, who, recollecting his instructions, set to crying with all his might.

Claude Wachtmann then enjoyed his triumph, for never had the like been heard before.

The face of Frantz Mathéus expressed consternation; however, when he heard Cineas speak to the great Antiochus, an imperceptible smile spread over his lips; he moved forward a step, so as to bring the head of Bruno outside of the circle.

Jean-Claude raised his hand, and everybody became silent as if by enchantment.

“ Illustrious Doctor Mathéus,” he continued, “ in like manner with the inhabitants of Babylon—”

But at the same instant Frantz Mathéus, without waiting for the end, drove both spurs into Bruno, who bounded off like a storm, through hedges, over gardens, crops, bushes ; crushing the cabbages of one, the turnips of another, the barley of this one, the oats of that—in short, as if the deuce were in him.

The cries of the crowd pursued him ; but the Doctor did not even turn his head, and was soon across the large communal meadow.

Jean-Claude’s face was as lank and yellow as a wax candle. He raised his long arms and cried—

“ I have not finished ! I have not yet read the passage of Nebuchadnezzar changed into an ox with the plumes of an eagle for his pride ! Listen, Jacques—Herbert—Christian !”

But nobody would listen ; the whole village was on the track of Mathéus, shouting, hissing, the dogs barking, as if the end of the world had come.

Very soon they saw the Doctor mount the Falberg at a gallop ; he had crossed the Zinsel swimming, and was holding on to Bruno’s neck, the tails of his coat flying in the air from the speed at which he was going.

At length he disappeared in the woods, and the peasants looked at one another aghast.

Jean-Claude greatly wanted to return to the continuation of his beautiful discourse, but everybody turned their backs upon him, saying—

“ What’s the use of your discourse since we have lost our Doctor ? Ah ! if we had only thought of it, some one might have held him by the bridle !”

It was thus that the illustrious Doctor Frantz Mathéus, thanks to his heroic resolution, to his presence of mind, and to the vigorous legs of Bruno, succeeded in recovering his independence.

CHAPTER IV.

His delight may be imagined when he saw himself safe from Jean-Claude and all the others. The distant cries of the village soon died on his ears, and gave place to the vast silence of the forest.

Then the good man, praising God for all things, let his bridle fall on Bruno's neck, and tranquilly ascended the hill of Saverne.

The sun was high when he reached the road; but though the heat struck full upon the nape of his neck, though perspiration trickled down his spine, and Bruno stopped from time to time to crop a few tufts of grass by the wayside, the illustrious philosopher perceived nothing of it. He already beheld himself in the theatre of his triumphs, going from city to city, from village to village, overthrowing sophists, and planting throughout the world the beneficent germs of anthropo-zoology.

“Frantz Mathéus,” he cried, “you are truly predestined! For you alone was reserved the glory of making the human race happy, and of diffusing the eternal light! See these broad-spread lands, these towns, these farms, these hamlets, these cottages—they await your coming! Everywhere the need is felt of a new doctrine, founded on the three kingdoms of nature; everywhere men are moving in doubt and uncertainty. Frantz, I tell you this without vanity, but also without

false modesty, the Being of beings has His eye fixed on you! March! march! and your name, like that of Pythagoras, of Moses, of Confucius, and of the most sublime lawgivers, will be repeated from echo to echo to the end of time!"

The illustrious Doctor was reasoning thus in all the sincerity of his soul, and descending the side of the Falberg under the shadow of the firs, when merry shouts, peals of laughter, and the rasping sounds of a violin, drew him from his profound meditations.

He was then about two leagues from Graufthal, in front of the Dripping Pan public-house, where the inhabitants of St.-Jean des Choux came to eat bacon omelettes, and to dance with their sweethearts. A number of people were there: mowers in their shirt-sleeves, and peasant-girls of the neighbourhood in short petticoats, whirling like the wind round the arbour. They raised the leg, stamped, and made passes, double passes, triple passes, and shouted enough to crack the clouds.

Coucou Peter, the fiddler, the famous Coucou Peter, welcomed in all the beershops, breweries, and taverns of Alsace—the good, the jovial Coucou Peter—was seated on a barrel of beer in a recess of the garden, in his big drugget jacket, garnished with steel buttons the size of crown-pieces, with fresh-coloured, plump-looking cheeks, and his hat surmounted by a cock's feather. He was scraping with full elbow-power an old country waltz, and formed in himself the whole orchestra of the Dripping Pan. Wine, beer, and kirschwasser flowed on the tables, and vigorous kisses, quite openly given, stimulated the universal enjoyment.

In spite of all his cares for the future of the world

and of civilisation, Frantz Mathéus could not withhold his admiration from this pleasant sight. He pulled up behind the arbour, and laughed heartily at the little kissings and lovemakings which he discovered through the hornbeam hedge. But while the good man was giving himself up to these curious observations, the fiddler suddenly stopped in the midst of a flourish, sprang from his barrel, and cried, in a ringing voice—

“ Ha ! ha ! ha !—the Doctor ! Good Doctor Frantz ! Hi, there ! Make way for me, that I may bring you the inventor of the peregrination of souls and the transformation of men into potatoes !”

It must be understood that the illustrious philosopher had committed the imprudence of communicating his psychologico-anthropo-zoological meditations to Coucou Peter, who had no fear of compromising the system by disrespectful allusions.

“ Ho, Dr. Mathéus !” he cried, coming out of his retreat, “ you’ve come in the nick of time. Hey for jollity !”

And throwing his hat into the air, he leaped the ditch, climbed over the paling, and seized Bruno by the bridle.

There was a general hurrah, for all the good people present knew Mathéus.

“ Come in, Doctor ! Take a glass of wine, Doctor !—no, a glass of kirschwasser—this way, Doctor !”

One took him by the collar, another by the arm, a third by the tail of his coat ; and they shouted, and the women laughed, till poor Frantz did not know which way to turn.

Bruno was led into the shade, and a feed of oats given him, and two minutes afterwards the illustrious

philosopher found himself seated between Petrus Brentz the gamekeeper, and Tobie Müller, the landlord of the Dripping Pan. Before him danced Coucou Peter, now on one leg, now on the other, and playing the famous Hopser of Lutzelstein with a seductive energy that was truly amazing.

“Take my jug,” cried Tobie.

“Doctor, you’ll drink out of my glass, won’t you?” cried little Suzel. And her lips, parted with a soft smile, showed her little snow-white teeth.

“Yes, my dear,” stammered the good man, whose eyes sparkled with happiness ; “yes, with pleasure.”

Some one clapped him on the shoulder.

“Have you breakfasted yet, Doctor?”

“Not yet, my friend.”

“Hi, Maître Tobie ! A bacon omelette for the Doctor !”

At last, at the end of a few minutes everybody had returned to their places : the young girls, their arms resting on the table, and their hands entwined in those of their sweethearts ; the old papas in front of their mugs of beer, the stout mothers against the hornbeam hedge. Coucou Peter once more gave the signal for the dance, and the waltzing recommenced with greater spirit than ever.

The illustrious philosopher would have liked to have begun to preach then and there, but he saw that youth given up to pleasure was not in a condition to listen to his words with all desirable attention.

In the interval between the galops Coucou Peter returned to the table to empty his glass, and cried—

“Doctor Frantz, your legs must be stiff ! Take one of these pretty little pullets, and off with you both !

Look at little Grédel yonder—how neatly she's made, how appetising ! What a waist ! what eyes ! what pretty little feet ! Grédel, come here ! Doesn't your heart prompt you ?”

The young peasant approached smiling, and looking charming in her black cap and velvet bodice dotted all over with glittering spangles.

“ What do you want, Coucou Peter ?” she asked archly.

“ What do I want ?” said the fiddler, taking her by the chin, which was round, rosy, and smooth as a peach : “ what do I want ? Ah ! if I were only still twenty ! If we were only twenty, papa Mathéus !”

He placed his hand on his stomach, and sighed as if his heart were bursting.

Grédel drooped her eyes, and murmured, in a timid voice—

“ You're laughing at me, Coucou Peter—I know you are—you're laughing at me !”

“ Laughing ! laughing !—say rather crying, my pretty Grédel. Ah ! if I were still only twenty, as I said before, then indeed I would laugh, Grédel !”

For a moment he remained silent, with a melancholy air : then he turned towards Mathéus, who was blushing up to his eyes, and cried—

“ That reminds me, Doctor Frantz—where the deuce are you off to so early in the morning ? You must have started at daybreak to be over here before noon.”

“ I am going to preach my doctrine,” replied Mathéus, in an ingenuous and natural tone.

“ Your doctrine !” cried Coucou Peter, opening his big eyes ; “ your doctrine !”

For a few seconds he remained wondering ; but presently, bursting into a roar of laughter, he cried—

“Ha! ha! ha! that’s a good joke—a good joke! Ha! ha! ha! Doctor Frantz, I should never have thought you were so funny!”

“What do you find to laugh at? Have not I told you a hundred times at Graufthal that I should start sooner or later? It all seems to me perfectly natural.”

“But you’re not going about like that?”

“Certainly I am.”

“You are going to announce your peregrination of souls, your transformation of plants into animals, and animals into men?”

“Yes, with many other not less remarkable things which I have not had time to tell you of.”

“But, I say, you’ve put some money in your pocket, at all events? That’s a very important article in preaching.”

“I!” cried Mathéus, carried away by a noble pride; “I have not brought with me a liard—not a kreutzer! When one is possessed of the truth, one is always rich enough.”

“One is always rich enough!” repeated the fiddler; “that’s a good idea! a capital idea!”

The peasants gathered about them, and without understanding this scene, saw plainly by Coucou Peter’s face that something extraordinary was passing.

Suddenly the fiddler began to dance, waved his hat gaily, and exclaimed—

“I’m in with it! It’ll just suit me!” Then, turning to the crowd, astonished at his strange antics, he cried—“Look well at me, you there! I’m the prophet Coucou Peter! Ha! ha! ha! you don’t in the least understand the meaning of it? Nor more do I! This is my master; we’re going to preach through the uni-

verse ! I shall march in front ! crin-crin ! crin-crin ! erin-erin ! A crowd assembles—we announce the peregrination of souls—the public feels flattered and—off we go ! We eat well, drink well—sleep here, gad there—and off, and off, and off we go !”

He leaped, he laughed, he wriggled, in short, as if the deuce were in him.

“ Papa Mathéus,” he cried, “ I’m with you—I’ll never leave you any more !”

The illustrious Doctor could not believe that he was in earnest, but he was no longer left in doubt when he saw Coucou Peter mount upon his barrel and cry in a loud voice—

“ This is to let you know that, instead of flying away to heaven as in the olden times, the souls of men and women return into the bodies of animals, and those of animals into plants, trees, and vegetables, according to their conduct ; and that, instead of coming into the world by means of Adam and Eve, as many people say, we have first been cabbages, radishes, fishes, or other one or two legged animals—which is much simpler and easier to be believed. It is the illustrious Dr. Frantz Mathéus, my master, who has discovered these things, and you will oblige us by so informing your friends and acquaintances.”

With that, Coucou Peter came down from his barrel, waved his hat, and gravely placed himself beside Mathéus, crying, “ Master, I abandon all to follow you !”

Mathéus, softened by the white wine he had drunk, shed gentle tears.

“ Coucou Peter,” he cried, “ I proclaim you, in the face of heaven, my first disciple ! You shall be the foundation-stone of the new edifice built upon the three

kingdoms of nature. Your words have found an echo in my heart; I see that you are worthy to consecrate your life to this noble cause."

And he kissed him on both cheeks.

The peasants were all astonished at this scene; however, when they saw the fiddler putting his violin into his bag, a vague murmur arose, and, but for their respect for Frantz, they would have been very angry. The illustrious philosopher rose and said to them—

" My children, we have passed many years together; most of you I have seen grow up under my eyes; others have been my friends. You know that I have done for you all it was in my power to do; I have never spared trouble to be of service to you, nor care, nor my small fortune, the fruit of my father's hard toil! Henceforth the universe claims me; I owe myself to humanity; let us part good friends, and think sometimes of Frantz Mathéus, who has loved you so well!"

Tears choked his utterance as he pronounced these last words, and he had to be assisted to his horse, so greatly was the good man affected.

Everybody wept, and regretted this excellent physician—the father of the poor, the consoler of the unfortunate. They watched him slowly going away, his head buried between his hands; nobody spoke a word or uttered a cry, for fear of adding to his sorrow, and all felt that they were suffering an irreparable loss.

Coucou Peter, with his hat cocked upon his ear, and his bag over his shoulder, followed the doctor, looking as proud as a cock. Now and then he turned, and seemed to say, " I laugh at all of you now! I'm a prophet!—the prophet Coucou Peter—with an off, and an off, and an off we go!"

CHAPTER V

To see Frantz Mathéus and his disciple descending the narrow path of the Steinbach, through the tall firs, no one would ever have thought that those two extraordinary men were on their way to conquer the world. It is true that the illustrious philosopher, gravely bestriding Bruno, with head erect and pendent legs, had something majestic in his appearance; but Coucou Peter did not in the least look like a real prophet. His jovial countenance, fat stomach, and his cock's feather, gave him rather the aspect of a jolly drinking companion, who cultivated deplorable prejudices in favour of good cheer, and thought not at all of the disastrous consequences of his physical appetites.

This remark did not inspire Mathéus with any very serious reflections, but he proposed to himself, by putting his follower under a psychologico-anthropo-zoological regime, by inducing moderation, and, in short, by penetrating him with the leading principles of his doctrine, to bring him into a more desirable physical condition.

Coucou Peter looked at the matter from quite another point of view.

“Won’t people be surprised to see me a prophet!” he said to himself. “Ha! ha! ha! the droll dog is always up to something! What the devil is he up to

now, preaching about this transformation of bodies and peregrination of souls? What's the meaning of it? The *Strasbourg Almanack*, next year, will take notice of it! They'll draw me on the first page with my violin, and underneath, in large letters, that every one will be able to read, 'Coucou Peter, son of Yokel Peter, of Lutzelstein, who set out to convert the universe.' Ha! ha! ha!—you'll make a good thing out of it, my jolly prophet! Eat enough for four, drink enough for six, and preach temperance to everybody else! And, who knows?—when you grow old you may become chief rabbi of the peregrination of souls, sleep in a feather-bed, let your beard grow, and clap spectacles on your nose! You cunning rascal, I should never have thought of your laying hold of so good a place!"

In spite of himself, however, some few doubts still presented themselves to his mind; these pleasant hopes appeared to him hazardous; he foresaw impediments, and conceived vague apprehensions.

"I say, Maître Frantz," he said, quickening his pace, "my tongue has been itching to speak for the last quarter of an hour; I want very much to ask you something."

"Speak out, my good fellow," replied the Doctor; "don't stand on ceremony. Do you already feel your noble resolutions shaken by doubt?"

"Exactly—and that bothers me. Are you quite sure about your peregrination of souls, Maître Frantz? For, to tell you the truth, I've no recollection of having lived before coming into the world."

"Am I quite sure!" cried Mathéus. "Do you imagine that I would deceive the world, cast desolation

into the midst of families, agitation into cities, disorder into consciences?"

"I don't say that, Doctor; on the contrary, I'm altogether for the doctrine. But, mind you, there are many others who won't believe in it, and who will say, 'What the devil does he mean by bothering us with stuff about his souls that go back into the bodies of animals?—does he take us for fools? Souls that travel about!—souls that go up and down the ladder of being!—souls on four feet, and souls that sprout with leaves! Ha! ha! ha! the man is mad! he's mad!' I don't say that, Maître Frantz; it's other people, you understand? *I* believe everything; but let's see how you will answer the others."

"What shall I reply to them?" cried Mathéus, pale with indignation.

"That's it; what will you reply to these unbelievers—these good-for-nothings?"

The illustrious philosopher had stopped in the middle of the path; he raised himself in his stirrups and cried, in a ringing voice—

"Miserable sophists! disciples of error and false doctrines! your captious quibbles, your scholastic subtleties, will avail you nothing against me! In vain would you attempt to obscure the planet which shines in the skyey vault—that planet which gives you light and warmth, and to nature its fecundity! In spite of your blasphemies, in spite of your ingratitude, it ceases not to shed its bounties! What need have I to see the soul that inspires me with the noblest of thoughts? Is it not ever present in my being—is it not myself? Cut off these arms, these legs; will Frantz Mathéus by that means be diminished, from an

intellectual and moral point of view? No; the body is but the outer case—the soul is eternal! Ah! Coucou Peter, place your hand upon your heart, see before you that immense vault, the image of grandeur and harmony, and then dare to deny the Being of beings, the First Cause of this magnificent creation!"

When Mathéus had improvised this discourse, Coucou Peter looked at him with one eye cunningly closed, and said—

"Very good—very good; you've only to talk to peasants in that fashion, and all will be right."

"You believe, then, in the peregrination of souls?"

"Yes, yes! We shall swamp all the preachers in the country; there's not one of them able to speak so long as you without taking breath; others have to blow their noses or to cough now and then to pick up the thread of their discourse; but you—right on you go! It's magnificent! magnificent!"

By this time they had arrived at the crossing of the Three Springs, and Doctor Mathéus stopped—

"Here are three paths," he said. "Providence, which ceaselessly watches over the fate of great men, will point out to us the one we ought to follow, and will inspire us with a resolution, the consequences of which, for the progress of enlightenment and civilisation, are incalculable."

"You're not wrong, illustrious Doctor Frantz," said Coucou Peter; "Providence has just whispered in my ear that to-day is Saint Boniface's day—the day when Mother Windling, the widow of Windling, the public-house-keeper of Oberbronn, every year kills a fat pig; we shall arrive in the nick of time for black-pudding and foaming beer."

“ But we shall not be able to commence our preaching !” cried Mathéus, scandalised at the sensual tendencies of his disciple.

“ On the contrary, all will go well together. Mother Windling’s public-house will be full of company, and we’ll begin to preach at once.”

“ You think there will be a considerable number of people there ?”

“ Not a doubt of it ; all the village will be there to eat grills.”

“ Well, then, let us go to Oberbronn.”

They went on, and towards five o’clock in the afternoon the illustrious philosopher and his disciple turned majestically into the only street of Oberbronn.

The animation of the village delighted Mathéus ; for above everything the good man loved country life. The perfume of grass and flowers that filled the air at the haymaking season ; the big waggons standing loaded up to the garret-windows of the houses, while the oxen, resting from their work with legs outstretched to get at bundles of hay hanging on the shining points of prongs of pitchforks ; the mowers reclining in the shade to refresh themselves ; the regular tic-tac of the threshers ; the clouds of dust escaping from the ventholes ; the shouts of laughter of young girls romping in the barn ; the honest faces of old men with white and bony heads stooping at the windows, cotton caps upon their bald pates ; children escaping out of sight in the interior of cottages, where hanks of flax hang about large cast-iron stoves, and old women sing infants to sleep ; dogs wandering about and barking at the passers ; the chirping of the sparrows, disposing themselves on the roofs, or audaciously swooping down upon the sheaves in the

shed—all this was life and happiness to Doctor Frantz. For a moment he thought of going back to Graufthal. Even Bruno raised his head, and pleasant cries greeted Coucou Peter all along the road.

“ Ha !—here’s Coucou Peter come to eat black-pudding ! Now we shall have some fun ! Good day, Coucou Peter !”

“ Good day, Karl ! Good day, Heinrich ! Good day, Christian—good day, good day !”

He shook hands right and left ; but all eyes were turned towards Mathéus, whose grave air, good cloth clothes, and big horse, shining with fat, inspired the deepest respect.

“ It’s a curé ! It’s a minister ! It’s a tooth-drawer !” they said amongst themselves.

Some of them questioned Coucou Peter in whispers, but he had not time to answer their inquiries, and hastened after the Doctor.

They at last reached the turn of the street, and Frantz Mathéus immediately conceived the happiest auguries on discovering the Widow Windling’s public-house. A young peasant-girl was neatly whitewashing the sides of a wooden balcony. Between two doors was to be seen a superb porker hanging upon a wooden frame, and laid open from the neck to the tail ; it was white, it was red, it was washed, shaved, and cleansed ; in fine, it was delightful to see. A big shepherd’s dog, with long grey hair, was lapping up a few drops of blood from the pavement. The windows were of antique form. Poplars rustled in the air. The immense boarded roof overspread the wood-store, press-house, and yard, in which a troop of pretty fowls were clucking and pecking. On the perch of a dovecot were

a pair of magnificent blue pigeons, cooing and swelling out their chests. Everything, indeed, gave to Mother Windling's house a truly hospitable physiognomy.

“ Hallo ! hallo ! hallo ! You, there ! Hans ! Karl ! Ludwig !—will you come out, you idlers ?” cried the fiddler as he approached. “ What ! aren't you ashamed of yourselves to leave the learned Doctor Mathéus at the door ?”

The house was full of customers, and it might have been supposed that a visiting controller, a garde général, or even an under-prefect, had arrived, so loudly did he raise his voice, and such airs of importance did he give himself.

Nickel the serving-man appeared at the outer gate in a state of alarm, crying, “ Good gracious ! what's all this noise about ?”

“ What's it about, you unfortunate ! Don't you see the illustrious Doctor Mathéus, the inventor of the peregrination of souls, waiting for you to hold his stirrup ? Make haste !—lead his horse to the stable ; but, I warn you, I shall have an eye on the manger, and if there is but a single atom of straw amongst the oats, you shall answer to me for it on your head !”

Mathéus then alighted, and the domestic hastened to obey the orders given him.

The illustrious Doctor did not know that to enter the principal room it was necessary to pass through the kitchen ; he was thus agreeably surprised by the spectacle offered to his view. They were in the midst of the preparations for the black - puddings ; the fire burned brightly on the hearth ; the dishes on the dresser-shelves shone like suns ; little Michel stirred the contents of the pot with marvellous regularity ;

Dame Catherina Windling, her sleeves turned up to her elbows, stood before the tub, majestically holding the large ladle filled with milk, blood, onions, and chopped marjoram. She poured slowly, while fat Soffayel, her servant, held open the skin, so that the agreeable mixture might conveniently fill it.

Coucou Peter remained like one petrified before this delicious picture; he opened his eyes, dilated his nostrils, and inhaled the perfume of the saucepans. At last, in expressive tones, he cried—

“Good heavens! what a jollification we’re going to have here! what a feast!”

Dame Catherina turned her head and joyously exclaimed—

“Ah! Coucou Peter! I expected you! You never forget to come in time for the puddings.”

“Forget! No, no, Dame Catherina, I’m incapable of such ingratitude. They’ve done me too much good for me ever to forget them.”

Then, advancing with a grave air, he took from her hand the large ladle, plunged it into the tub, and for some seconds examined the mixture with a truly psychological attention.

Dame Catherina crossed her red arms, and appeared to await his judgment; at the end of a minute he raised his head, and said—

“With all due respect to you, Dame Catherina, a little more milk is wanted here; the milk should never be stinted—it gives the delicacy; it is, as one may say, the soul of the pudding.”

“That’s just what I’ve been saying,” cried Mother Windling; “didn’t I say to you, Soffayel, that a little more milk would do no harm?”

“Yes, Dame Catherina, you said that.”

“Well, now I’m altogether sure of it. Run and fetch the milk-jug. How many ladlesful do you think, Coucou Peter?”

The fiddler again examined the mixture, and replied—

“Three ladlesful, Dame Catherina; three full ladles! Indeed, in your place, I should put in four.”

“We’ll put in four,” said the good woman. “It’ll make sure.”

At that moment she perceived Mathéus, an unmoved spectator of the gastronomic council.

“Ah! good heavens! I did not see this gentleman! Is this gentleman with you, Coucou Peter?”

“It’s a friend of mine,” said the fiddler; “the learned Doctor Mathéus, of Graufthal—an intimate friend of mine! We are travelling for our own pleasure and to spread the lights of civilisation.”

“Ah, Doctor, pray forgive me!” said Mother Windling; “we are up to the eyes in puddings! Come in, and pray excuse us.”

The illustrious philosopher made several low bows, as if to say, “Don’t think of apologising;” but he was thinking all the time, “This woman belongs to the order *Gallinae*,* a prolific race, naturally voluptuous and fond of good living;” as her lively eyes, fat and rosy cheeks, and her slightly upturned though large nose, sufficiently proved.

This was what the Doctor thought, and certainly he was not wrong; for Mother Windling had led a free-and-easy life in her day; stories were told of her—stories—in fact, extraordinary things; and, in spite of her forty years, she had still very pleasant eyes.

* This order includes domestic poultry.

Mathéus entered the principal room, and seating himself at the end of the deal table, gave himself up to judicious reflections, while Coucou Peter rinsed out the glasses, and ordered Soffayel to fetch a bottle of wolxheim to refresh the illustrious Doctor.

While the servant was gone to the cellar, Dame Catherina went up to the fiddler, and, laying her hand on his shoulder, said to him in a whisper—

“ Coucou Peter, this gentleman is your friend ? ”

“ My intimate friend, Dame Catherina.”

“ A handsome man,” she said, looking him full in the face.

“ Aha ! ” said Coucou Peter, looking at her in the same way and with a strange smile ; “ do you think so, Dame Catherina ? ”

“ Yes, I think him quite a gentleman.”

“ Ha ! ha ! ” said Coucou Peter, “ I should rather think so ; a man with land of his own, a savant, a first-rate physician.”

“ A physician, a man with an estate,” repeated Dame Catherina. “ You haven’t told me all, Peter, I can see by your face. What has brought him here ? ”

“ Ha ! how sly you are, Dame Catherina ! ” cried Coucou Peter with a wink ; “ you see things any distance off ! If I dare say all—but there are things——”

He went on wiping the glasses dry.

“ Tell me, Dame Catherina, does the miller Tapihans still come to see you ? ”

“ Tapihans ! ” cried Mother Windling ; “ don’t speak of him to me ! I laugh at him ; he wants to marry my house, my garden, my five-and-twenty acres of meadow-land, the shabby fellow ! ”

“ Take my word for it, he’s not at all the sort of man

you want," replied the fiddler; "the sort of man to suit you is——"

Fat Soffayel came up the cellar-stairs at the moment, and Dame Catherina appeared beaming.

"That's right—that's right," she said, taking the bottle; "I'll go and wait upon the gentleman myself. Go, Soffayel, and put four good ladlesful of milk into the tub. Look and see whether I am tidy, Coucou Peter—is my hair out of order?"

"You are as fresh as a rose, Dame Catherina."

"Do I really look so?"

"Yes; and you smell like a dish of strawberries."

"Go along with your nonsense!" she cried.

Then Mother Windling carefully wiped her arms on the towel that hung behind the door, took the bottle, and tripped into the principal room like a young girl.

Frantz Mathéus was seated by an open window, watching the labours of old Baumgarten's bees, whose hive was just in front of it; broad streaks of sunlight pierced the flowering rose-trees, and the illustrious philosopher, plunged in a soft reverie, listened to the vague hum raised by the insects at the close of day.

At this moment Mother Windling entered; behind her came Coucou Peter, gaily, with three glasses in his hand.

"Make yourself comfortable, Dr. Mathéus," he cried; "you are tired, the day is hot; give me your overcoat, and let me hang it up on this peg."

"Yes, yes," said the good woman; "pray make yourself quite at home. Coucou Peter has told me your name, and Doctor Mathéus is well known in this part of the country—it's a great honour to receive you in our house."

Mathéus, moved by a reception so flattering, raised his eyes blushingly, and replied—

“ You are very good, my dear madam ; I regret not having brought with me a copy of the *Anthropo-Zoology*, to do homage to you with it, and to show my gratitude.”

“ Oh, we love men of intellect !” cried Mother Windling ; “ *I* love men of mark !”

As she spoke she looked at him with so tender an air that the good man felt quite embarrassed.

“ It’s not a Tapihans, a man of no means, a miller,” she continued, “ that gives me so much pleasure to serve. But only to hear the scandalous tongues of the village ! A report has been spread that we are going to be married, because he comes here every evening to take his glass. Heaven preserve me from wishing for such a mere breath of a man ! It’s quite enough to have been left a widow once.”

“ I have no doubt of it,” said Mathéus, “ I have no doubt of it ! Be sure that these reports have no influence on me ; it would be contrary to my philosophical principles.”

The fiddler then filled the glasses, crying—

“ Come, Dame Catherina, you must clink glasses with the Doctor. Your health, Doctor Frantz !”

Mother Windling did not disdain the wolxheim ; she drank the health of Doctor Mathéus like a veritable hussar. Then, without ceremony, she relieved him of his greatcoat, and, with his wide-brimmed hat, hung it upon one of the pegs on the wall.

“ I must have you quite comfortable, and I see you are not at your ease. I stand on no ceremony. Come, Coucou Peter, another glass, and then I’ll go back to

the kitchen to see about your supper. By-the-bye, Doctor, you must tell me what you like best—something roasted, a *fricassé* of chicken?”

“I assure you, madam,” replied Mathéus, “I have no preference.”

“No, no, no; that won’t do. There must surely be something you like.”

Coucou Peter gave her a wink as much as to assure her that he knew the Doctor’s favourite dish.

“Very well,” cried the good woman, “we’ll contrive something.”

After that she emptied her glass at a draught, smiled at Doctor Mathéus, and went out of the room, promising soon to return. Coucou Peter followed her for the purpose of getting her to prepare a dish of *küchlen*, of which he was very fond himself, and with which he supposed the illustrious philosopher must also be pleased. Frantz Mathéus, in delicious calm, remained by the open window. He heard Mother Windling’s voice giving orders, the bustle of the kitchen, the going and coming; he attributed this attention to the reputation which his magnificent work had already attained in the world, and congratulated himself on the generous resolution he had taken of enlightening the universe.

CHAPTER VI.

NIGHT had closed in when Dame Catherina, bright, affable, and smiling, reappeared in the principal room, carrying a magnificent copper candlestick, shining like gold.

The illustrious Dr. Mathéus, awaiting the arrival of the peasants, had emptied the bottle of wolxheim, and meditated a superb address, based on the judicious principles of the wise and learned Aristotle; but the entrance of Mother Windling suddenly changed the direction of his impressive and luminous ideas.

She had put on her handsome large-flowered petticoat, her little red silk fichu, and her Sunday cap, with broad black ribbons spread out like the wings of a butterfly.

The illustrious philosopher was dazzled; he silently contemplated the plump arms, the well-rounded bust, the bright eyes, and the truly provoking briskness of the widow.

Dame Catherina speedily remarked this admiring expression in the good man's moistened eyes, and her full rosy lips shaped themselves into a tender smile.

"I've kept you waiting a long time, Doctor," she said, spreading a white cloth over the table; "yes, a very long time," she repeated, with a mellow look that penetrated to the depths of Mathéus' bashful soul.

“Take care, Frantz, take care of what you are about!” he said to himself: “remember your high mission, and do not suffer yourself to be charmed by this seductive creature.”

But he felt an indescribable kind of thrill run down his spine, and dropped his eyelids in spite of himself.

Dame Catherina was radiant.

“How timid he is!” she said to herself; “how he blushes! Ah, if I could give him a little courage! No matter; he is still green—and he’s very well made. All will be right.”

At that moment Coucou Peter entered, carrying a dishful of smoking puddings, laughing heartily, and with the merriest face that ever was seen.

“Ah, Doctor Frantz!” he cried; “ah, Doctor Frantz, what a scent! What a taste! All blood, bacon-fat, and cream! Fancy, Papa Mathéus, I’ve already gobbled up one half an ell long, and that’s only given me an appetite!”

As he spoke he deposited his large dish upon the table, with an air of adoration; then, spreading himself against the wall, he untied his cravat, opened his waistcoat, undid the three top buttons of his breeches, to make himself quite at ease, and breathed a profound sigh.

Fat Soffayel followed him with plates, covers, and a big loaf of mixed wheat and rye, just out of the oven; she ranged all in neat order, and Coucou Peter, taking up a large horn-handled knife, cried—

“Now, Dame Windling, sit you down by the Doctor. Ha! ha! ha! A happy meeting!”

Then, turning up his sleeves, he sliced up the pud-

ding, and, raising a piece on his long fork, placed it on Matheus's plate.

“Master Frantz,” he said, “introduce me that into your organism, and then tell me what you think of it.”

At the same moment he noticed that the bottle was empty, and uttered an exclamation of surprise—

“Soffayel! don't you know that black-pudding likes to swim?”

The servant, ashamed of her forgetfulness, hurried away to the cellar; but in the kitchen she met Tapihans, and said to him, in a bantering tone—

“Aha!—poor Tapihans, poor Tapihans! The cuckoo sings in the house; you'd better go and look for another nest!”

Directly afterwards, Tapihans, yellow and pale, with pointed nose, long ears, and a cotton cap on the top of his head, a hunch on his back, and his hands tucked in the pockets of his grey waistcoat, appeared in the doorway.

“Ah! is that you, Tapihans?” cried Coucou Peter; “you've come just in time to see us eat.”

The little man advanced into the very middle of the room, and for some seconds looked at the company, but mostly at the illustrious Doctor and the widow, who did not deign even to turn her head towards him. His nose seemed to swell visibly; then, parting his lips, he said—

“Good evening, Dame Catherina.”

“Good evening,” she replied, swallowing a piece of pudding.

The miller did not stir from his place, and watched the Doctor, who watched him, thinking: “This man cannot belong to any but the fox species—a race given

to plunder and possessed of little delicacy ; moreover, he is attacked by a never-dying worm ; his pale complexion, sharp cheek-bones, and keen eyes are bad signs."

After making these observations, he drank a glass of wolxheim, which appeared to him delicious.

"So you're not married yet, Tapihans?" cried Coucou Peter, between two mouthfuls of pudding.

The little man returned no answer, but pressed his lips closer together.

"A piece more pudding, Doctor," said the widow, with a tender look ; "a little piece more."

"You are very good, my dear madam," replied the illustrious philosopher, visibly affected by the delicate attentions and kindness of this excellent creature.

Indeed, Dame Catherina filled his glass, turned upon him her most flattering looks, and every now and then, resting her hand upon his knee, leaned towards him and whispered in his ear—

"Ah, Doctor Frantz, how happy I am to know you!"

To which the good man responded—

"And I also, my dear madam ; believe me, I feel deeply sensible of your cordial hospitality. You are truly good, and if I can contribute to your improvement it will be with the greatest pleasure."

These little side conversations made Tapihans turn pale ; at last, he moved from where he stood, seated himself in a corner of the room, near the fireplace, and striking on the table, called out in a shrill voice—

"A mug of wine!"

"Soffayel, go and get this man a cup of wine," said the widow carelessly.

"This man!" repeated the miller ; "is it of me you

are speaking, Mother Windling? Perhaps you don't happen to know me?"

"I'll call you Tapihans as much as you like," replied Dame Catherina sharply; "but don't bother me."

Tapihans said nothing more; but he drank off three mugs of wine one after the other, hammering on the table, and calling—

"Another mug!—and look sharp in bringing it!"

"I say, old fellow," cried Coucou Peter, raising his voice, "you're really not married yet, then?"

"Suppose I'm not, Coucou Peter, what then?" replied the miller, with a bitter smile. "We can't go about the country like barefoot vagabonds who have nothing to eat in their own houses; we have to take care of our means, to look after what we've got, to cultivate our lands and gather in our harvests. We want to find wives amongst us; but women like better to throw themselves at the head of the first scamp that goes by—people that nobody knows from Adam or Eve, or about whom too much is known; individuals who fill their purses at the expense of the poor, and blow into a clarionet to pay their shot. You know something about that, friend Coucou Peter. We've a good deal to put up with, but we have the consolation of being able to say, 'This is my meadow; this is my mill; this is my vine.'"

Coucou Peter, nonplussed for a moment, quickly recovered his ordinary assurance, and replied—

"Meadows! mills! vines!—very good, Tapihans, very good—but that's not all; you still want a presentable face; people marry faces; they like them to be plump, rosy, fresh-looking—something in my style,"

he said, stroking his cheeks and rolling his eyes impudently. “Women haven’t always mills before their noses!”

“Ha! ha! ha!” cried Mother Windling, slapping him on the shoulder; “how you always make me laugh!”

By this time Mathéus, having finished his meal, drank one more glass of wolkheim in short sips, wiped his mouth, and turned slowly towards Tapihans.

“Friend,” he said to him, “attend closely to what I tell you: it is not meadows, gardens, or houses that have to be considered when one marries; but races—that is to say, families of carnivorous, frugivorous, herbivorous, graminivorous, insectivorous, omnivorous, or other animals which it would take too long to mention here—which must be taken into account in considering the use of life. Observe: pigeons do not pair with buzzards, foxes with cats, goats with birds; well! it must be the same with men, for if you examine the matter from the psychologico-anthropo-zoological point of view, the only true method—because it is the only one that is universal—you will observe that there are species of men as well as species of animals. It is very simple: we all come from one animal, as I have demonstrated in the twenty-third chapter of the eighth volume of my *Palingenesis*: read that work, and you will be convinced of it. Now, then, we must mix and combine races with judicious attention; it is the special mission of humanity, which is the general meeting-place, the fusion of all types, submitted to a new force, which I call will. Let us still proceed by analogy: the race of deer and that of hares, for example, might form a happy mixture, while those of wolves and sheep could not

produce anything but a kind of monsters, at once stupid and ferocious, cowardly and cruel! Alas! how many of these sad alliances do we not see in the world! Nothing but fortune is now consulted, and that is very wrong! Now, as particularly regards you, my friend—I do not advise you to marry. Your health——”

But Tapihans, pale with rage, would not allow him to finish.

“What!” he roared; “do you dare to say that I resemble a wolf?”

And, using all his force, he flung his jug at Mathéus. Fortunately the illustrious philosopher, with his habitual prudence, moved quickly, so that the missile struck Coucou Peter full in the stomach, and caused him to utter a dolorous groan.

Before Mathéus had recovered from his amazement, Tapihans had opened the door and fled. Dame Cathérina rushed and seized a broomstick, and, standing on her doorstep, was heard calling down the street—

“Blackguard! come back if you dare! Wretch! to insult honourable people in my house! Was ever seen the like!”

She then returned indoors, flew to Mathéus, begged him to drink a glass of wine, sprinkled his temples with cold water, and consoled him in all sorts of ways.

Coucou Peter sighed, and exclaimed, in plaintive tones—

“My organism is very ill, very ill! Soffayel, my dear Soffayel, make haste and refill the bottle, or I shall faint.”

At the end of a quarter of an hour Mathéus came to himself, and murmured—

“This man evidently belongs to the race of beasts of

prey ; he is capable of returning with a hatchet, or some other instrument of the kind !”

“ Only let him come back !” cried the stout widow, doubling her fist in a threatening manner ; “ only let him come back !”

But it was in vain she said that, for Frantz Mathéus’s eyes turned ceaselessly towards the door, and the fear natural to his timid species made him blind to all Dame Catherina’s allurements.

Coucou Peter, having no further excuse for getting the bottle refilled, and feeling uncomfortable in the stomach, proposed going to bed. Everybody agreed with him, for it was late ; the windows of the principal room were all dark, and not the least sound was heard out of doors.

Therefore Mother Windling took up the candlestick from the table, told Soffayel to shut the shutters, and begged Mathéus to be good enough to follow her.

They ascended the winding stairs at the back of the kitchen, and everywhere Mathéus saw order and wise economy ; the passages were lined with great cupboards, and in these cupboards, which Dame Catherina had taken care to open, he saw tall piles of carefully-folded linen, red-bordered tablecloths, napkins, hemp, and flax. Farther on, grain spread to dry on wide floors ; here clover, colza, lucern grass ; in another place, wheat, barley, oats ; it was a true store of abundance.

At last Mother Windling conducted him into a large, well-furnished bedroom, in which there were two chests of drawers, the tops of which were laden with magnificent Lunéville chinaware, and Walerysthâl glass. It contained also a canopied bedstead, as high as the

Tower of Babel, and two handsome Saint Quirin looking-glasses.

Darting a last look at **Mathéus**, and pressing his hand timidly—

“ I hope you’ll sleep well, Doctor,” she said, casting down her eyes, “ and have no bad dreams.” She smiled, and contemplated the good man for a few seconds longer ; then she closed the door, and left the illustrious philosopher.

Coucou Peter, according to his custom, had gone to sleep in the barn.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT night Frantz Mathéus could not close an eye ; he ceaselessly tossed and turned with a noble enthusiasm in his feather-bed, and muttered exclamations of triumph. His heroic flight from Graufthal, the miraculous conversion of Coucou Peter, his hospitable reception by Mother Windling, kept running in his head ; he felt no desire to sleep ; on the contrary, never had his mind been more active, more lucid, more penetrating ; but the excessive warmth of his bed made him perspire outrageously ; so, towards morning, he dressed himself and quietly descended into the yard to breathe.

All was silent ; the sun hardly lit the topmost leaves of the poplars ; deep stillness reigned in the air ; Mathéus, seated on the kerb of the cellar steps, contemplated in speechless absorption the aspect of this rustic dwelling and the repose of nature.

The large mossy roofs, the long beams crossed by man's industry, the tall gables, the dull skylights ; in the background, the garden-gate opening into the fields, where the darkness was already beginning to fade ; the vague and undistinguishable forms of the trees—all plunged the Doctor into the most agreeable meditations.

Slowly the daylight descended from the roofs, and

shadows grew larger in the yard below ; then afar off—very far—Mathéus heard a lark sing ; then a cock put his head out of the window of the fowl-house, made a step forward, and expanded his shining wings to the fresh morning air ; a thrill of pleasure raised all his feathers ; he inflated his chest and sent forth a shrill, piercing, prolonged cry, that reached to the surrounding woods. The chilly hens advanced timidly to the edge of the ladder, calling to one another, springing from step to step, preening themselves with their beaks, cackling and laughing in their manner ; they spread themselves along the walls, hastily snapping up the worms drinking the morning dews. The pigeons very soon afterwards were flying in wide circles round the yard. At length the bright rays of the sun penetrated the stables ; a sheep bleated softly ; all the others answered it, and Mathéus opened a shutter to give the poor animals air. A delightful sight then expanded the good man's heart ; daylight streaming in amid the trembling shadows in long streaks of gold lit up the dark beams, the harness hanging against the wall, the cribs bristling with forage. Nothing in the way of peacefulness could surpass this picture : big oxen with half-closed eyelids, down-weighed heads, and knees bent under their chests, were still sleeping ; but the handsome white heifer was already wide awake ; she placed her bluish muzzle, glittering with moisture, on the back of the milch cow, and looked at Mathéus out of her great surprised eyes, as much as to say : “What does he want with us ?—I've never seen him before.”

There was also the draught-horse, looking very tired and broken-spirited ; but that did not prevent his every now and then taking a wisp of clover, which he

ate because he had nothing else to do. The little black kid raised itself on to the rack to get at a handful of still fresh grass ; but that which more than all struck the doctor was the magnificent Glaan bull, the pride and glory of Mother Windling.

He could not enough admire its broad crispy head, like the stump of an old oak, its short and shining horns, like iron wedges ; its soft and supple dewlap, extending from the lower lip to the knees.

“ O noble and sublime animal,” he said to himself in a tone of emotion, “ you cannot imagine what profound and admirable thoughts the sight of you inspires me with ! No, you have not yet attained the intellectual and moral development that can raise you to the height of a psychologico-anthropo-zoological sentiment ; but your forms are not the less marvellous ; they attest, by their harmonious completeness, the grandeur of nature ; for whatever may be said on the subject by materialists — beings possessed neither of sound logic nor of reasoning powers—that has not all been made in a day, but has taken thousands of ages to bring to this degree of æsthetic perfection. Yes, the passage from the mineral to the vegetable form, from the vegetable to the animal form, is inmeasurable, without speaking of interme diaries ; for, from the thistle state to that of the oak, and from the oyster state to that of the bull, the distance is prodigious. Therefore, Frantz Mathéus, admire within yourself that interior force, called God, soul, life, or by any other name, and which ceaselessly works towards the perfection of types and the development of individuality in matter.”

He paused, plunged in mute ecstasy.

Now, while Mathéus was addressing these reflections

aloud to himself, the boards of the vent-hole through which forage was thrown down to the cattle slid quietly in its groove, and the chubby-faced head of Coucou Peter was passed through the aperture. The fiddler's surprise may easily be imagined when he discovered his illustrious master haranguing a bull.

“My eye!”—he said to himself, “I do believe he wants to convert him!”

At the same time a singular idea flashed on his mind.

“Ha! ha! ha! it would be a good joke,” he cried; “wait a bit, the bull's going to answer you!”

He joined his hands before his mouth, and roared—

“Oh! oh! oh! great Doctor Mathéus—I am very—very unhappy!”

At these words the illustrious philosopher fell back in alarm.

“What is this?” he stammered, looking around him with staring eyes. “What—what do I hear?”

But he could see nothing; Coucou Peter's head was hidden by a pile of straw in the rack, and this excellent disciple laughed till his sides were almost split. After awhile, he went on in bellowing tones—

“Oh! oh! oh! I am very unhappy! I was the great Nebuchadnezzar. I thought of nothing but drinking and eating, and so I lost my place on the Ladder of Beings! Oh! oh! oh! I'm very unhappy.”

But the Doctor, though at first dumfounded, recognised the fiddler's voice.

“Coucou Peter,” he cried, “how dare you profane the most sublime philosophy? Do you imagine me so foolish as to give credence to vain illusions?”

Coucou Peter came out of the barn, laughing with all his might.

“Ha! ha! ha! what a joke! what a joke, Doctor Frantz! When I saw you talking to the bull, it came into my head to have a bit of fun.”

Mathéus himself could not help laughing, for he had, at first, been taken in.

“I knew well,” he said, “that souls cannot retrograde in the order of Nature; it is impossible—contrary to the system; therefore my surprise was great, and it was that which made me discover your trick. The human soul cannot exist in the body of an animal; it could not find sufficient room for the brain.”

The good man amused himself over his surprise a long time, and Coucou Peter did likewise, holding his sides.

They were still laughing, when Mother Windling, in a short woollen petticoat, striped with red, her arms bare to her elbows, still fresh-looking and full of grace, opened the yard-door and descended the steps. She had come to feed her poultry, her apron filled with peas, millet-seed, and all sorts of grain.

“Ah! good morning, Doctor,” she cried, on seeing Mathéus; “up so soon! Have you had a good night?”

“Very good, my dear madam—very good,” replied Mathéus.

“Shall I go and light the kitchen fire, Dame Catherina?” interrupted the fiddler.

“Yes, go, Coucou Peter; I shall be back presently. You shall see some beautiful hens, Doctor. They’re a real blessing. Chick! chick! chick! chick! Three of them lay every day, and such eggs! Chick-chick! chick-chick!—eggs as big as your fists. Chick-chick! chick-chick-chick!”

The fowls darted forward, the ducks waddled, the

geese hurried with their wings spread, and all of them cackled, cried, and quacked. They came from all sides ; top-knotted, feather-legged, large and small, blacks and whites, yellows and reds ; all struggling, springing, flying delightfully.

“How charming to see !” murmured the illustrious philosopher. “Oh, Nature, Nature, fecund mother ! rich-bosomed goddess ! animation ! breath divine ! Thy riches and variety are boundless !”

Mother Windling sidled, bridled, and smiled, attributing to herself the best part of these eulogiums.

“Aren’t my hens plump and well kept ?” she asked. “I give them the best of everything. Look at that great white one ; she has laid every day these three weeks. And the grey one down there, with the yellow feathers about her eyes, she’s a real household treasure ! Only imagine ! I’ve seen her lay twice in a day, an egg in the morning and another in the evening, besides those she hides. Look at that little black cock, a perfect little demon ! The day before yesterday he fought and beat the big one, on account of the little red hen there, a regular little shrew to set them by the ears ! I’ll bet they’re going to set-to again. What did I say ! You little villains, will you leave off ? Did one ever see the like !”

But all her calling out was of no avail ; the two rivals were engaged, beak to beak, with bristling neck-feathers, springing one above the other, pecking viciously, turning, leaping, and pursuing one another with incredible fury ; fortunately a fresh handful of grain caused the two to suspend the battle.

“Strange !” murmured Mathéus, “that these gallinaceous animals, usually so timid, are sometimes ani-

mated by the most ferocious instincts ! What cannot the furious and sanguinary passion of jealousy do !”

Mother Windling, looking at him out of the corner of her eye, thought : “ Poor dear man, you are thinking of Tapihans ! But you have nothing to fear. No, no ! the fellow is too much of a coward ever to come to the house again.” At last, emptying her apron, and looking at Mathéus with a tender smile, she asked—

“ Are you fond of eggs, Doctor ?”

“ Very, my dear madam—most of all when boiled in the shell ; they are then a wholesome and delicate food.”

“ Then we’ll go at once and pick them up ; there are sure to be enough for your breakfast.”

Without the least ceremony or hesitation she climbed up the ladder, and though the illustrious philosopher had rapidly turned his head, he could not avoid seeing the plump widow’s blue stockings, through which her sturdy calves were very vigorously indicated.

Dame Catherina slipped into the fowl-loft through a door under the pent roof, and reappeared radiant with satisfaction, bringing with her a dozen eggs, which she displayed triumphantly.

“ See here !” she cried, standing at the top of the ladder ; “ well, I’ve every day as many. What eggs ! —not a hen in the village lays such beauties ! Help me, Doctor—I daren’t come down alone.”

The good man was obliged to steady the foot of the ladder and lend his hands to Dame Catherina, who laughed, pretended to be afraid, and all the time seemed quite at her ease. Mathéus was as red as a raspberry.

“Thanks, Doctor,” she said. “I’m sure the white hen has laid behind the woodstack. I could see, from up there, an egg lying on some bits of straw. We must send Nickel to get it.”

She took the Doctor’s arm, and in this manner they entered the house.

When Dame Catherina and Mathéus appeared in the kitchen, Coucou Peter, seated on a stool before the hearth, was blowing with all his might through a long iron tube, to make the fire burn ; the coals flamed, the vine shoots crackled, water was bubbling in the boiler, a magnificent cutlet was frizzling on the gridiron, and spreading around a most agreeable odour.

Mother Windling paused on the threshold, and cried—

“You rascally Coucou Peter ! I’d like to know where you got that cutlet from ?”

Without in the least disturbing himself, Coucou Peter indicated the large oak cupboard.

“He’s like a cat, he sees everything ! But I thought I’d put the key in my pocket.”

“Who wants your key ?” replied the fiddler, quite gravely. “I don’t ; with a bit of straw I can open all the locks in the world.”

“Ah, the rogue !” cried the good woman, laughing, “he’ll end with the galleys !”

Mathéus would have remonstrated with his disciple, but Coucou Peter interrupted him.

“Maître Frantz,” he said, “I’m fond of cutlets—it’s not contrary to the system to be fond of cutlets ; all that is not forbidden is permitted ; isn’t it so, Dame Catherina ?”

“I suppose so ; anyhow, you’ve always the last

word! Now get out of the way, and let me boil the eggs. If the Doctor will go into the best room, I'll soon be with him; time to say a Pater, and all will be ready. You, Coucou Peter, go and water the Doctor's horse: Nickel has gone this morning to turn the water on to the large meadow."

"With pleasure, mother; with pleasure."

The fiddler went out, and the illustrious philosopher entered the best room.

Never had Frantz Mathéus felt more calm, more happy, more content with himself and nature. The open air had developed his appetite; he heard the fire crackling on the hearth, the cat purring under the table, and Dame Catherina sweeping the front of her door, while humming Karl Ritter's old refrain—

"Love me, and I'll love you! I'll love you! I'll love you!"

Now he contemplated the ancient Nuremberg clock, all yellow and wormeaten, with its china face painted with brilliant flowers, and its wooden cuckoo that chanted the hours, and the illustrious philosopher never tired of admiring its ingenious mechanism; now he stopped before an open window, and gazed tenderly out upon the little Place of Oberbronn.

There, about the green trough into which a stream of clear water flowed from a moss-grown spout, were gathered the young girls of the village, in short petticoats, and bare armed and legged. They were beating their linen, bawling, calling to one another, and noisily chatting; and the good man smiled at their unsophisticated manners and graceful attitudes.

Bruno was drinking at the trough, and every now and then turned his head as if to salute Mathéus.

Coucou Peter smacked his whip and said soft nothings to the blooming laundresses, who made fun of his fine speeches; but when—no doubt out of revenge—he wanted to kiss the prettiest of the band, there arose an incredible tumult of screams and laughter; the whole of them fell upon him and thumped him with their beetles and wet linen.

In spite of this violent attack, the impudent fellow did not let the girl go: he kissed her on the throat, on the nape of her neck, on her cheeks, crying joyously—

“Oh, how good it is! beat away! beat away! I laugh at it! I like it!”

Everybody came to the windows and laughed at what was going on; the old women squalled, the dogs barked, and Coucou Peter—red, moist, and out of breath—repeated—

“One more little kiss, for love of the peregrination of souls.”

“Ah, the rogue!” said Mathéus; “what an odd disciple I have there!”

At length, seeing the peasants with their sticks running towards the place, Coucou Peter mounted Bruno in haste, leaped over the watertrough, and rode into the stable, crying—

“How pretty the girls of Oberbronn are! They’re as sweet in the mouth as cherries, and as crisp as filberts!”

Then he tried to fasten the door, for the peasant lads were furious.

Unluckily, Ludwig Spengler, the garde champêtre’s son, whose sweetheart he had kissed, arrived almost as soon as he, and pushed his stick between the wall and

the door, and the whole of them rushed into the stable. Coucou Peter, yelling like the deuce, and calling out—“Friends!—my dear friends—it was all a joke—nothing but a joke!” was soundly thrashed.

They dragged him out, and blows with sticks were showered on him like hail.

“Sweet as cherries!” shouted one.

“Crisp as filberts!” yelled another.

“I laugh at it!—I like it!” cried Ludwig Spengler, striking with the full swing of his arm.

Mathéus, who was a witness of the whole affair, called from the window—

“Courage, courage, Coucou Peter! accept this anthropo-zoological trial with philosophical resignation; even thank these young men for labouring towards your moral perfection! For a long time I have remarked that you belong to the family of bullfinches, a voluptuous race, feeding on the buds of flowers, and the most delicate fruits. After a few such lessons as this, I hope to see you renounce these sensual principles.”

Poor Coucou Peter writhed, and looked pitifully at his master, as much as to say: “I wish you had been in my place, with your anthropo-zoological principles.”

The Doctor’s short address, however, produced a happy diversion in Coucou Peter’s favour; the honest countrymen, struck by the august physiognomy and gestures of the illustrious philosopher, assembled under the window, and the fiddler took advantage of this moment to make his escape, and shut himself securely into the stable.

Half the village were collected under the Doctor’s

eyes ; they formed a circle, and looked at him over each other's heads and shoulders, all being anxious to hear him.

Imagine the good man's enthusiasm ; he would have liked to embrace them all ; he could not contain his delight.

“Frantz,” he said to himself, “the hour for your preaching is come ; it is clear that the Being of Beings, the Great Demiourgos, has brought together this numerous auditory for the purpose of their being converted by you. You would be blind not to see in this the finger of Providence !”

Such was his emotion, that for some seconds he was unable to articulate a word ; he blew his nose, he opened his mouth ; so great a number of arguments presented themselves to his mind, that he knew not where to commence : he wanted to say everything at once.

But at length his soul became calm, and, in a ringing voice, he cried—

“O, noble inhabitants of Oberbronn, privileged beings of nature, humble and worthy country-people, you know not how deeply I am touched as I look upon you ; you know not the glory that awaits you, the treasures which I bring to you !”

At the word “treasures,” there was a great stir amongst the crowd ; they expected to see him plunge his hand into a bag and throw money out of the window. Those who were farthest off instantly struggled to get nearer, and Katel the hunchback, who was in the front rank, began to scream ; the poor woman, seeing others forcing their way before her, thought they would deprive her of her share.

This appearance of interest gave evident pleasure to the illustrious philosopher.

“Yes, my friends,” he continued, in a pathetic tone, “I bring you treasures of wisdom, treasures of philosophy and virtue!”

The crowd was undeceived.

“The devil fly away with you and your treasures of wisdom!” cried Ludwig Spengler; “you look to me to stand a good deal more in need of some than we do!”

Mathéus, moved with indignation, stopped short, with the view of overwhelming this rude fellow with a grand apostrophe, but the little miller, Tapihans, approaching the window, took off his cotton cap and said—

“Good day, Abraham, what are you doing here? Do you want to make Jews of us?”

“My name is not Abraham,” cried the illustrious philosopher. “I am Frantz Mathéus, doctor of medicine of the faculty of Strasbourg, corresponding member of—”

“Oh, I know you well,” interrupted the miller mockingly; “you call yourself Abraham Speizer, and not more than a year ago you sold me a blind horse, which I’ve never been able to get rid of. And, more than that, if I’m not mistaken, you must be the rabbi of Marmoutier!”

Hardly had he uttered these words than a great commotion rose amidst the crowd.

“Set upon the rabbi!—down with the rabbi!—on to the Jew!”

“My children, you are deceived!” cried the good man, “your animal instincts blind you; listen to me!”

The Illustrious Dr. Mathéus.

But nobody would hear a word he had to say. The old women raised their broom-handles, the men their cudgels; some looked about for stones; and Mathéus, pale, overcome with emotion, stammered unintelligibly. Suddenly acting upon a luminous inspiration, he turned on his heels and fled into the kitchen.

The shouts and tumult then redoubled outside the house. Dame Catherina herself was terrified.

“Good heavens!” she cried, “what have you done, Doctor?”

“Nothing, dear madame, nothing,” gasped the good man; “it’s the miller, it’s——”

“Tapihans?—ah, the wretch! the wretch! He wants to separate us; he’s raised the village against us! But fly!” she cried, thrusting a large black-pudding into his pocket. “Fly! we shall see each other again; you will come some other time!”

The illustrious philosopher did not need this advice; he had already hurried across the yard, stammering—

“Yes, yes! we shall meet again in the spheres above!”

He darted into the stable by the back door, and found his disciple buckling the girths of his horse.

Coucou Peter had observed the scene from a window looking out on to the street, and foreseeing the issue of the sermonising, had come to saddle Bruno.

“Aha, Maître Frantz!” he said; “you’re just in time; I was off without you. Our peregrination of souls doesn’t appear to take in this village.”

“Let us hasten away from this place,” cried Mathéus, not knowing which way to turn.

“Yes, I think that’s the best thing to be done; these beggars of peasants are not up to our level. Get up behind me, for there’s an end of our business here.”

At the same time he mounted on horseback, and the illustrious doctor clambered up behind him with marvellous dexterity.

Coucou Peter at once drew the bar, threw open the door, and dashed out like one riding for his life.

A terrible clamour rose on all sides of them, and Mathéus immediately received three painful cudgel-blows, Coucou-Peter calling out at each blow—

“ Ah ! ah ! another psychological lesson !”

But the illustrious philosopher said nothing ; he closed his eyes and clung to his disciple so tightly that the fiddler could hardly breathe.

Dame Catherina, standing on her door-step, her eggs in a basin, uttered plaintive cries as she watched these proceedings, despairing of her dear doctor's safety. But when she saw his horse going off at full gallop through the midst of the hooting and yelling crowd, the good woman pressed her hand upon her tender heart, dried her eyes with the border of her apron, and returned to the kitchen heaving a deep sigh.

“ Poor, dear man !” she murmured ; “ may Heaven conduct him !”

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER galloping for a full half-hour, Frantz Mathéus, hearing nothing but the beating of his horse's hoofs on the road, and the song of the birds in the free air, ventured to open first one eye, then the other ; and seeing himself in the midst of a thick forest, far from the cudgels and sophistical minds of the worthy country-folks, breathed like one who has been cut down after having been hanged.

Coucou Peter, on his side, slackened Bruno's pace, and felt his own ribs to make sure they were still intact. When he had thoroughly convinced himself that all was in its place, he turned towards the village, which was still to be seen through the trees, and extending his hands with an imploring air, cried—

“Peasants of Oberbronn, the prophet Coucou Peter curses you !”

“No, no—do not curse them,” murmured the good doctor, in a tone of supplication ; “do not curse them. Alas ! the unfortunates know not what they do.”

“So much the worse for them,” replied the fiddler, out of temper. “I curse them to the third and fourth generation ! Ah, you beggar, Tapihans ! you beggar, Spengler ! I curse you both ! I despise you like the dust of my shoes !”

This said, he turned in the saddle and rode on.

Bruno was slowly following the path to Eschenbach. The sun heated the sandy ground ; thousands of insects danced about the furze-bushes, and their vague buzzing was the only sound that met the ear. This immense calm of nature insensibly affected Mathéus ; he gently bowed his head, covered his face, and burst into tears.

“ What’s the matter with you, Maître Frantz ? ” cried Coucou Peter.

“ Nothing, my friend,” replied the good man, in a stifled voice. “ I am thinking of those unhappy people who have persecuted us ; I am thinking of the numberless transformations they still have to endure before reaching moral perfection ; and I pity them for having such bad hearts. I, who would have done so much for them ! —who sought to enlighten them on their future destinies ! I, who love them still with all the strength of my soul ! They strike me, cover me with abuse, and misunderstand the purity of my intentions. You cannot imagine how much this pains me. Let me weep in silence ; these are gentle tears, and prove to me my own goodness. Oh, Mathéus ! Mathéus ! man of virtue ! ” he cried, “ weep—weep for the errors of your species ; but murmur not against eternal justice ! That alone makes your greatness and strength. In turn, onion, tulip, snail, and hare—finally man. You have not always been a philosopher ; it has needed many ages to overcome your animal instincts. Be indulgent, therefore, and think that, if inferior beings do you harm, it is because they are not worthy to comprehend you.”

“ That’s all very fine ! We are knocked about, and you take pity on those fellows ! ” cried Coucou Peter.

“The devil’s in it if we haven’t enough to be sorry for on our own account!”

“Listen to me, my friend,” said Mathéus, drying his eyes. “The more I think of it, the more convinced I am that it could not be otherwise. A nameless prophet was sent to Beth-el, on condition that he neither drank nor ate; but having unfortunately eaten a piece of bread, he was devoured by a lion, and his bones were found between this lion and an ass that had been given to him. Jonah was swallowed by a fish. It is true, he only remained three days in the fish’s stomach; but it is very disagreeable to be kept for seventy-two hours in such a constrained position. Habakkuk was transported by his hair through the air to Babylon. Imagine, Coucou Peter, how much he must have suffered by being suspended by his hair during such a journey. Ezekiel was stoned. It is not exactly known whether Jeremiah was stoned or sawed in two; but Isaiah was certainly sawed in two. Amos was——”

“Maître Frantz,” cried Coucou Peter, abruptly, “if you think to give me courage by telling me such stories as these, you are very much mistaken. I won’t conceal from you that, sooner than be cut in two, I’d rather go back to my fiddle, and play tunes on it all the rest of my life.”

“Come, come—do not be afraid. In these days prophets are no longer so ill-treated; on the contrary, handsome pensions are given to them—so long as they maintain at least the existence of a soul.”

“And we, who maintain thousands of souls, deserve pensions a thousand times bigger!” cried the gay fiddler.

Conversing in this manner, the illustrious philosopher

and his disciple tranquilly went their way along the valleys of the Zorn. Mathéus, who loved nothing so well as the interior of the woods, forgot the ingratitude of the human species ; the scarce perceptible sound of an insect nibbling the bark of an old tree, the flight of a bird through the rustling foliage, the vague murmur of a stream in the ravine, the whirl of the gnats dancing above the still pools—these thousand details of solitude ceaselessly furnished new texts for his anthropo-zoological meditations.

Coucou Peter whistled to amuse himself, and from time to time paid his respects to his flask of kirsch-wasser. Bruno often went into the Zorn up to the saddle-girths ; at those times Maître Frantz and his disciple clung to one another, raising their legs well out of the way of the water, which they watched running below them with tumultuous gurglings.

The heat, however, became overpowering ; not a breath of air penetrated the woods. Coucou Peter, having dismounted, felt the perspiration streaming down his back ; Mathéus, who had not closed an eye all night, yawned from time to time, murmuring, “Great—Great Demiourgos !” without exactly knowing what further he wished to say.

In this way they reached a gorge where the torrent spread over a pebbly bed. Hardly had Bruno reached the edge of the water, before the confounded beast stretched out his neck to drink, and Maître Frantz, not expecting this movement, was nearly shot over his head. Coucou Peter quickly seized him by the tails of his coat ; and then the rogue gave vent to such a formidable roar of laughter that all the neighbouring echoes rang with it.

“ Coucou Peter ! Coucou Peter !” cried the scandalised Doctor ; “ are you not ashamed to laugh when I am in danger of being drowned ? Is this, then, your affection for me ?”

“ I’m laughing, Maître Frantz, because you’ve escaped. If I hadn’t got hold of you, you’d now be paddling in the water like a frog.”

“ This is an unpropitious day,” replied Mathéus ; “ if we continue our journey, I foresee numberless misfortunes !”

“ Many besides you have dropped off to sleep and tumbled from their horses,” said Coucou Peter. “ Lie down on the moss, take a good nap, and the unpropitious will have passed away by the time you wake. I’ll go and have a bathe. Bruno won’t be sorry for a rest, I’m sure.”

This advice was too much in accord with the good Doctor’s own ideas not to be agreeable to him.

“ I approve of this pleasant design,” he said. “ Lend me the aid of your shoulder ; I am stiff. Take off the horse’s bridle. Go and bathe, my good fellow—go and bathe ; a bath will refresh your blood.”

While he was speaking, Frantz Mathéus laid himself down at the foot of an oak, and was truly glad to be able to stretch his limbs in the midst of the heather. The crickets chirped about him. Now and then a wave broke on the pebbles with a sharp slush ; he would then open his eyes, and saw Coucou Peter in the act of undressing—of taking off his boots.

The sound of the torrent, the rustle of the leaves, lulled his imagination into vague reverie. Through the tufted branches of the trees he confusedly distinguished the sky, the crests of the mountains. At

length his mind reposed ; the same sounds fell upon his ears, but their monotony resembled deep silence. The good man distinguished them no longer—his soft and regular breathing announced a profound sleep. Then, perhaps, his mind, freed from its earthly trammels, and going back ages upon ages, wandered, in the form of a hare, through the immense forests of Gaul—perhaps, also, he saw again the humble roof of his sires at Graufthal, and good old Martha weeping for his absence.

CHAPTER IX.

Now the illustrious philosopher had slept for three hours when Coucou Peter cried — “ Maître Frantz, wake up! — Here are the pilgrims of Haslach coming down the mountain ; they outnumber the grains of sand on the seashore ; get up, master, and see them !”

Having raised himself, Mathéus perceived, first his disciple perched in a wild cherry-tree, gathering the fruit in the manner of the thrushes, and giving himself up heartily to the pleasure ; the eyes of the good man were next directed to the neighbouring mountain.

Through the tall firs, farther than the sight could reach, came an immense train of barefooted pilgrims, their shoes carried at the end of their walking-sticks, some carrying provisions, packages, flasks, and all sorts of things necessary to life.

An old woman advanced alone at their head, reciting a prayer in the midst of universal silence, the others responding —

“ Pray for us ! pray for us !”

And this cry, repeated from mouth to mouth, to the tops of the rocks, on the verge of the ravines, in the hollows of the valleys, resembled the melancholy chant of flights of cranes traversing the clouds.

The illustrious Doctor was so touched with the sight as to be unable to utter a word, but Coucou Peter,

from the height of the tree, pointed out with his hand each village as it reached the summit of the Nideck—

“Here come the Walsch folks!” he cried. “I recognise them by their straw hats, their short waistcoats, and their big breeches, that reach up to their armpits; they are jolly fellows, making a pilgrimage to drink Alsace wine. Those that are now coming after them in short breeches and large coats with big buttons shining in the sun, are from Dagsberg, the most sanctified and poorest country in the mountains; they are coming to the fair to kiss the bones of St. Florent. Here come the St. Quirin people, in short blouses, and caps cocked on their ears; look out for fisticuffs in the procession! All these fellows from the glass houses and factories love to get drunk and fight against the Germans; it isn’t with them, Maître Frantz, that it will do to discuss the peregrination of souls. Look at those now coming down the branch road of Roche Plate; they are called the Big Jims of the mountain; they’ve joined the pilgrimage to show their fine clothes. See how they’ve covered their hats with their handkerchiefs, and tucked their trousers into the tops of their boots; they are the swells of Aberschwiller, and walk gravely with their noses in the air! But who the deuce can those be, coming staggering after them? Ah! I recognise ‘em—they are the people of the plain, the Lorrainers, with their little bags filled with walnuts and bacon. Lord, how tired they look! Poor little women, I pity them with all my heart. All these little women of the plain are as fresh as roses, while those of the highlands, of La Houpe for example, are as brown as berries.”

The good apostle found something to say about every

village, and Mathéus lost himself in the depths of profound meditation.

At length, at the end of about an hour, the tail of the procession came clearly in sight ; it slowly ascended the hill, soon passed round by the Nideck rock, some few straggling groups following at intervals ; these were the sick, the infirm in waggons. They, in their turn, disappeared, and everything returned to the silence of solitude.

The illustrious philosopher then looked at his disciple with a grave air, and said—

“ Let us proceed to Haslach—it is there that the Being of Beings calls us. Oh, Coucou Peter, does not your heart tell you that the Great Demiourgos, before bearing us to the scene of our triumphs, has seen fit to offer to our sight a picture of the immense variety of human races in this desert ? Do you realise, my friend, the sublime majesty of our mission ? ”

“ Yes, Maître Frantz, I understand clearly enough that we must be getting on our way ; but first eat some of these cherries I’ve gathered for you, and then on we go ! ”

Although Mathéus did not find in these words all the enthusiasm he could have desired, he seated himself, his disciple’s hat between his knees, and ate the cherries with a very good appetite. Coucou Peter having then brought back Bruno, who was cropping the young branches at some distance, Maître Frantz mounted, his disciple took the bridle, and they passed up the sandy path leading to the Roche-Plate.

The sun was setting behind the Losser, and long jets of gold pierced the tops of the tall pines. Many times Mathéus turned to contemplate this imposing

sight; but when they had penetrated the woods all became obscure, and Bruno's hoofs resounded under the dome of the great oaks as in a temple.

About an hour afterwards, when the moon was beginning to peep under the foliage, they perceived, fifty paces below them, a group of pilgrims quietly making their way towards the fair. Coucou Peter at the first glance recognised Hans Aden, Mayor of Dabo, his donkey Schimel, and his little wife Thérèse seated in one of the panniers, but he was altogether surprised to see a chubby child carefully wrapped up and tied in the ass's other pannier, for Hans Aden had no child that he knew of. They were going along like veritable patriarchs; little Thérèse, with her silk handkerchief tied round her pretty face, looked on her child with inexpressible tenderness; the donkey walked with sure feet along the edge of the slope, cocking his long ears at the least sound, and then, with a melancholy air, tall Hans Aden, dressed in his long overcoat, the tails of which beat against his calves, his three-cornered hat on the back of his head, and his hands in his back pockets, walked slowly, shouting from time to time—

“ Hey ! Schimel—hey !”

At this sight, and without waiting for Mathéus, Coucou Peter scurried down the path, crying—

“ How d'ye do, Maître Hans Aden ?—how d'ye do ?—where the deuce are you going so late ?”

Hans Aden turned round slowly, and his little wife raised her eyes to see who it could be who was addressing them in that fashion.

“ Ah ! it's you, is it, Coucou Peter,” said Hans, holding out his hand to him; “ good evening. We are making the pilgrimage.”

“The pilgrimage!—what a lucky chance!” cried Coucou Peter, joyously; “we are going there too. Good faith!—an excellent opportunity to renew our acquaintance. But what are you making the pilgrimage for, Maître Hans Aden?—have you anybody sick in your family?”

“No, Coucou Peter, no,” replied the Mayor of Dabo. “Thank God, everybody at home is well. We are going to thank St. Florent for having vouchsafed us a child. You know that my wife and I have been married for five years without having had that happiness: at last my wife said to me, ‘Listen to me, Hans—we must make a pilgrimage; all the wives who make a pilgrimage have children!’ I thought there was no use in it. ‘Bah!’ I said, ‘that’s no good, Thérèse—and, besides, I can’t leave the house; it’s just harvest time; I can’t give up everything.’ ‘Well, then, I’ll go alone,’ she said to me; ‘you are an unbeliever, Hans Aden, and you’ll end badly!’ ‘Well, go by yourself, then, Thérèse,’ I said to her, ‘and we shall see which of us is right!’ Good!—she went; and imagine, Coucou Peter, just nine months after came a baby!—a big, fat baby; the finest and handsomest boy-baby of the mountain! From that time all the women of Dabo have been wanting to make pilgrimages.”

Coucou Peter had listened with singular attention to this story; suddenly he raised his head and said—

“And how long is it since Dame Thérèse went on her pilgrimage?”

“It was this day two years,” replied Hans Aden.

“Two years!” cried Coucou Peter, turning pale, and supporting himself against a tree; “two years!”

“What’s the matter with you?” asked Hans Aden.

“Nothing, Maître Hans—nothing; it’s a weakness that comes into my legs whenever I sit too long.”

At the same time he looked at little Thérèse, who looked down and became as red as a cherry. She appeared shy, and took up the child to give him the breast; but before she had untied the fastenings, Coucou Peter advanced, exclaiming—

“Ah, Maître Hans Aden!—how lucky you are! Everything succeeds with you!—You are the richest herr of the mountain; you have fields and meadows, and here St. Florent sends you the handsomest child in the world! I must have a good look at the little fellow,” he said, taking off his hat to Dame Thérèse; “I’m in love with all the little ones!”

“Stand on no ceremony, Coucou Peter,” cried the mayor, proudly; “anybody may see him—there’s no affront!”

“Kiss him, Monsieur Coucou Peter,” said Dame Thérèse, in a low tone; “kiss him—isn’t he a beauty?”

“Beautiful!” cried Coucou Peter, while two big tears streamed slowly down his red cheeks—“beautiful!—what fists! what a chest! what a laughing face!”

He held the child up, and contemplated it with open eyes; one might have thought he was never going to give it back; the mother turned away her head to dry a tear.

At last the merry fiddler himself put back the little one into the pannier, carefully raising the pillow before laying him down upon it.

“Look you, Dame Thérèse,” he whispered, “children like to have their heads high—don’t forget that.”

He then buckled the strap and laughed with the pretty little mother, while tall Hans Aden stood a few paces off, cutting a hazel switch into a whistle.

Mathéus, who had been retarded by the steepness of the path, now rejoined his disciple.

“Good morning, good people!” cried the illustrious Doctor, raising his broad-brimmed hat. “God’s blessing be upon you!”

“Amen!” replied Hans Aden, returning with his hazel switch.

Dame Thérèse inclined her head gently, and appeared absorbed in the most delightful reveries.

For a quarter of an hour they went on without speaking; Coucou Peter walking beside the donkey, and looking at the child with pleasure, and Maître Frantz, thinking of the events that were in preparation, self-absorbed.

“Are you still going about the country as you used to go, Monsieur Coucou Peter?” asked Thérèse at length, timidly. “Do you not sometimes rest?”

“Always on the tramp, Dame Thérèse—always content! I’m like the bird that has only a branch to perch on at night, and flies away the next day to wherever there’s harvesting going on.”

“You are wrong, Monsieur Coucou Peter,” she said. “You ought to be laying up something against the time when you will be old—so worthy, so honest a man; think what it would be to fall into poverty!”

“What must be must be, Dame Thérèse. I find it enough to get my living from day to day, having nothing but my violin to live by. Besides, I’m not what you take me for to look at me; I’m a prophet! The illustrious Doctor Mathéus will tell you we’ve discovered the peregrination of souls, and are going to preach the truth to the universe.”

These words roused Maître Frantz from his reflections.

“Coucou Peter is right,” he said ; “the hour is near, the destinies are about to be accomplished ! Then those who have trained the vine and sown the good seed will be glorified ! Great changes will be wrought in the earth ; the words of truth will pass from mouth to mouth, and the name of Coucou Peter will resound like that of the greatest prophets ! The tenderness which this dear disciple has exhibited at the sight of infancy, the age of weakness, gentleness, and simple purity, is a proof of his goodness of soul, and I do not hesitate to predict for him the highest destiny !”

Dame Thérèse looked at Coucou Peter, who modestly cast down his eyes, and it was evident that she was happy to hear so much that was good concerning the brave fiddler.

At that moment they passed out of the wood, and the town of Haslach, with its broad-pointed roofs, its winding streets, and its church of the time of Erwin, met their view. A thousand confused voices rose in the air. All the houses were lit up as for a festival.

They descended the mountain in silence.

CHAPTER X.

ABOUT nine o'clock in the evening the illustrious philosopher and his new companions made their entry into the ancient town of Haslach.

The streets were so crowded with people, waggons, and cattle, as to be almost impassable.

The tall houses with their jagged gables overhung the tumult, throwing the light of their little windows upon the excited crowd. All these pilgrims from Alsace, from Lorraine, and from the mountains, congregated about the public-houses and inns like ants; others had settled themselves along the walls, others under sheds or in barns.

The sound of bagpipes, the dull lowing of oxen, the clatter of horses' hoofs, the patois of the Lorrainers and Germans, made an incredible confusion. What a subject for meditation for Mathéus!

It was then that Hans Aden and Dame Thérèse felt glad of having met Coucou Peter; what would they have done without him in the midst of such a turmoil?

The joyous fiddler pushed aside the crowd, crying, "By your leave!" stopping at the most difficult points, leading Schimel by the bridle, advising Mathéus not to lose himself, animating Bruno, knocking at the inn doors to ask for lodging. But, in spite of all said concerning little Thérèse, the mayor, and the illustrious philosopher, he was everywhere answered—

“ Go farther on, my good people, and may Heaven guide you !”

He never lost courage, and cried gaily—

“ Forward !—Never mind, Dame Thérèse, never mind ; we shall find our snug corner all the same.—Aha, Maître Frantz ! what do you say to this ? To-morrow we'll set to preaching.—Maître Hans Aden, take care of that cart !—Come along, Schimel !—Hey ! Bruno !”

The others were almost stupefied.

Mathéus, seeing that the people of Haslach sold their hay, straw, and everything else to the poor pilgrims worn-out with fatigue, felt his soul oppressed with sorrow.

“ Oh, hard and unbelieving hearts !” he cried to himself, “ know you not that this spirit of lucre and traffic will cause you to descend the Ladder of Beings ?”

Unfortunately nobody minded him, and several people at windows even laughed at his simplicity.

“ In Heaven's name, Maître Frantz,” cried Coucou Peter, “ don't make any anthropo-zoological speeches to these people, without you want to run the risk of having to spend the night under the stars, and worse still !”

As to Dame Thérèse, she pressed the brave fiddler's arm, to his evident satisfaction.

In spite of his indignation, the illustrious philosopher could not help admiring the singular industry of the inhabitants of Haslach. Here a burly butcher, standing between two candles, sold three and even four different kinds of meats. These different meats, all thoroughly fresh, were a pleasure to look upon ; while the pretty servant-girls, with their little baskets on their arms, their open eyes, and slightly

turned-up noses, looked more fresh, more plump, more rosy than the steaks hanging on the hooks in the butcher's shop. Here a blacksmith, with bare arms and smutty face, was working with his assistants at the back of his forge—the hammers clattering, the bellows blowing, the sparks flying out on the foot of the passers ; and farther on, Conrad the tailor was making haste to finish for the fair a new scarlet waistcoat for the mayor's assistant—his blackbird in its wicker-cage whistling a tune, with which he drew his needle in cadence. Magnificent cakes of all sizes met the sight in the bakers' windows ; and the apothecary, for this day, had placed in his window two big glass bottles, one filled with red, the other with blue water, with lamps behind them, producing a superb effect.

“ How grand the world is ! ” Mathéus said to himself ; “ each day civilisation makes fresh progress ! What would you say, my good Martha, if you saw such a sight as this ? You would not be able to believe your eyes ; you could never have foreseen the triumph of your master on so vast a stage ! But truth shines everywhere with eternal brilliancy, and overcomes envy, sophism, and vain prejudices ! ”

The little caravan, jostled and driven from street to street, at last came in front of Jacob Fischer's good old public-house, and Coucou Peter uttered an exclamation of joyous surprise.

The lamp was swung above the door, lighting the whole of the front of the house, from the sign of the Three Roses to the stork's nest on the topmost point of the gable.

“ Maître Frantz,” cried Coucou Peter, “ do you like cheese-tarts ? ”

“ Why do you ask ? ” said the good man, surprised at such a question.

“ Because Mother Jacob made kougelhofs and cheese-tarts three days ago. It’s the only thing she thinks of ; it’s what one might call her philosophical idea when the fair-time approaches. Daddy Jacob thinks only of bottling his wine and smoking his pipe behind the store ; and when his wife calls he lets her call, knowing that nothing will stop her ; for she is like a hen that’s going to lay—the more she is driven about the more noise she makes. But here we are. What a lot of people ! —Come, Dame Thérèse, you may alight.—Maître Hans Aden, come and hold Schimel’s bridle, while I go and beg Daddy Jacob to take us in.”

They were in front of the public-house, the crowd whirling around them. They saw the drinkers go up and down the steps unsteadily ; glasses jingled, cans clashed ; voices called for beer, sourcroust, sausages ; the servant-girls, whom the guests chucked under the chin as they passed, uttered laughing little cries ; Mother Jacob clattered the plates and dishes, and Daddy Jacob turned the tap in the cellar.

Coucou Peter entered the public-house, promising soon to return. Indeed, at the end of a few seconds, he came back with Maître Jacob himself, a hale man with jovial face and shirtsleeves turned up to his elbows.

“ My poor fellow,” he said, “ nothing would please me better than to be of service to you. But every room is taken ; I’ve nothing left but the barn and the shed ; see if either of those will suit you.”

Coucou Peter looked at little Thérèse with an air of distress, and then at the crowded street.

“If it were only for myself, Maître Jacob, I’d accept it at once ; a poor devil of a fiddler is used to sleeping on straw. But just look at this good little mother, at this poor child, and at this good Doctor Mathéus, the cream of philosophers !” cried he, in a heartrending tone of voice. “Come, Daddy Jacob—put yourself in the place of these people !”

“What can I do, Coucou Peter ?” replied the publican. “With all the goodwill in the world, I can’t empty my rooms ; I can’t offer you——”

“Ah, Monsieur Coucou Peter, don’t give yourself so much trouble on our account,” then said Dame Thérèse ; “we are not so hard to please as you think.”

“You accept the shed, Dame Thérèse ?”

“Why not ?” she cried, smiling ; “many others would be glad to find a shelter in the midst of this tumult—wouldn’t they, Hans Aden ?”

Coucou Peter, delighted at hearing her say this, cared nothing for what tall Hans Aden might answer ; as soon as Dame Thérèse had accepted the shed, he hurried down the garden in search of dry wood.

“Thanks, Daddy Jacob !” he cried.

“Take care not to set fire to the barn,” said the landlord.

“Don’t be afraid, Daddy Jacob—don’t be afraid !”

The night was dark ; in a very little time a bright and pleasant fire lighted up the beams and tiles of the outhouse.

Ah ! it was not the handsome bedchamber at Oberbronn, with its two chests of drawers and good featherbed, into which one sank up to the ears. The black beams showed from floor to floor to the summit of the roof ; and on the side of the street, four oaken posts

sheltered you from the wind. No St. Quirin looking-glasses were to be seen there, but stable-doors along the wall; and from the far end of the shed, pigs, raising with their snouts the planks of their sty, wished you "Good evening."

Maitre Mathéus reminded himself, with satisfaction, that other prophets before him had inhabited like places.

"Virtue," he said, gravely, "lives under the thatched roof. Let us rejoice, my friends, that we do not dwell in palaces."

"Very good," said Coucou Peter; "but let us arrange things so as not to go to bed in the mud."

Every one then set to work: Hans Aden climbed the barn-ladder, and threw down some bundles of straw through the window; Mathéus unharnessed Schimel and Bruno; Dame Thérèse produced provisions from a haversack!

Coucou Peter saw to everything: he gave forage to the beasts, spread litter for them, hung up the harness, tasted the wine, and never lost sight of the donkey's pannier in which the child was sleeping.

Very soon all was ready, and they comfortably seated themselves on trusses of straw for supper.

Similar scenes were passing in the Rue du Tonnelet Rouge; every group of pilgrims had its fire, the glare of which was reflected on the surrounding houses.

To the tumult insensibly succeeded a vast silence all these worthy people, overcome with fatigue, chatted amongst each in low tones as in the bosom of their family. It was so with Coucou Peter, Hans Aden Dame Thérèse, and Mathéus: it might have been imagined that they had known one another for long

years, when they were seated about the fire, and the bottle passed from hand to hand ; they felt quite at home.

“ After you, Dame Thérèse,” said Coucou Peter. “ Jolly, this small wine of Alsace !—Where was it grown, Maître Hans Aden ?”

“ At Eckersthal.”

“ A famous place ! Hand me a slice of ham.”

“ Here it is, Monsieur Coucou Peter.”

“ Your health, Maître Frantz !”

“ Yours, my children ! What a beautiful night !—how mild the air is ! Great Demiourgos foresaw that his children would have no place of shelter for their heads ! O Great Being !” cried the good man, “ Being of Beings ! accept the thanks that rise from a sincere heart ! It is not for ourselves alone that He is to be thanked, my dear friends ; but for this innumerable crowd of creatures come from so far with the honourable purpose of paying Him their homage !”

“ Maître Frantz, you are not seated comfortably ; take this truss of straw.”

“ This will do very well, Coucou Peter ; I am quite comfortable as I am.”

Schimel’s pannier was set up against the wall, and Coucou Peter, every moment, lifted the covering to see whether the little one was sleeping soundly. Bruno and Schimel were quietly munching their allowance ; and when the flickering rays of the fire fell upon the posts, the windows fringed with rugged tufts of straw, waggons, and a thousand other objects in the shade—when it lit the calm and meditative head of the illustrious Doctor, the tender face of Thérèse, or the jovial features of Coucou Peter, the whole scene resembled an old picture out of the Bible.

Towards eleven o'clock Mathéus asked permission to be allowed to go to sleep ; tall Hans Aden had already stretched himself by the wall, and slept profoundly ; Dame Thérèse was not yet sleepy, nor was Coucou Peter, and they continued their conversation in a low tone.

Before sinking into repose, Maître Frantz heard the voice of the crier repeating in the silence—"Eleven o'clock—past eleven!" then footsteps passing down the street, a dog barking and rattling his chain ; he opened his eyes, and saw the shadow of Schimel's ears moving on the wall like the wings of a night-moth.

The servants of the Three Roses bolted the doors and laughed in the passage ; these were his last impressions.

CHAPTER XI.

DAYLIGHT was spreading its golden hues upon the posts of the shed when Mathéus was awakened by ringing shouts of laughter.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! See—see, Dame Thérèse ! ” cried Coucou Peter. “ Look at the little rascal ! Isn’t he cunning ? Isn’t he ? He’s born to be hanged ! —ha ! ha ! ha ! —he’s certainly born to be hanged ! ”

Maître Frantz, having turned his eyes in the direction whence these joyous exclamations proceeded, saw his disciple near a trellis adjoining the Three Roses. This trellis, decked with trees, was covered with magnificent peaches. Coucou Peter was holding out one of these peaches to the child in its pannier on Schimel’s back. The child extended his little hands to seize it, and the jolly fiddler advanced and drew it back, laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks.

Dame Thérèse, from the other side, looked at the infant with a tender smile ; she appeared very happy, and yet there was a vague melancholy in her look ; Hans Aden gravely looked on, as he smoked his pipe with his elbow resting on the paling.

Nothing more charming than this morning picture could be looked upon ; there was so much of unaffected gaiety, good-humour, and tenderness imprinted on the features of Coucou Peter, that Maître

Frantz said to himself—“What an honest face! how like a child he amuses himself! How happy he is! how lighthearted! He is the best lad I have ever known! What a pity that his sensual instincts and disorderly love of the flask often carry him beyond the limits of propriety!”

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, the good man rose and shook the straw from his clothes; he then advanced, took off his hat, and saluted the worthy people, wishing them “Good day.”

Dame Thérèse replied by a simple inclination of the head, so absent-minded was she; but Coucou Peter cried—

“Maître Frantz, look at this beautiful child! what fun he is! Tell us what race he belongs to!”

“This child belongs to the bullfinch family,” replied Mathéus, unhesitatingly.

“To the bullfinch family!” cried Coucou Peter, taken completely by surprise. “Faith, not to flatter you, Maître Frantz—I—I think he has very good anthropo-zoological reasons for belonging to the family of the bullfinches.”

Hans Aden having finished his pipe, put it in his pocket, and said to his wife—

“Come, Thérèse, come; it’s time to go into the fair before it becomes too crowded.”

“Are you going with us, Maître Frantz?” inquired Coucou Peter.

“Certainly; where is Bruno?”

“In the stable; you’ve no need to take him. Dame Thérèse is going to buy all sorts of things; but for that, we should leave Schimel also.”

These explanations were enough for Mathéus; and they all set forth.

The whole town was filled with people ; the waggons and cattle had been cleared away by order of the mayor. Garlands were hung from the windows, leaves and flowers were scattered in the streets, and in the market-place rose a superb altar ; but what more than anything pleased the illustrious philosopher was the pleasant scent of moss and fresh-gathered flowers, and the garlands waving in the air at every movement of the breeze.

He admired also the young peasant-girls with their head-dresses and bodies dotted with glittering spangles ; the old women, who were decorating the altar with vases and candlesticks, were still more magnificent, for they wore the old costume of yellow or violet flowered silk and gold-brocaded coif, the richest costume ever seen.

“ Maître Frantz,” said Coucou Peter, “ they worked better in the olden times. I recollect that my grandmother had a dress that had belonged to *her* grandmother, and that was still new ; nowadays everything becomes old in four or five years.”

“ Except truth, my friend. Truth is always young : what Pythagoras said two thousand years ago is as true as if he had said it yesterday.”

“ Yes, it’s like old violins,” replied Coucou Peter ; “ the more you play upon them the better they sound, until they get cracked ; they can be mended, but by going on putting in new pieces, nothing of the old fiddle is left, and the music becomes poor.”

Chattering in this way, our good folks arrived at the fair. The crowd was already great : a thousand confused sounds, of whistles, fifes, and children’s trumpets, rang in the ears ; the wooden stalls exhibited in the

open air their hardwares, wooden swords, dolls, looking-glasses, and Nuremberg clocks ; the voices of sellers calling their wares drowned one another.

Coucou Peter would have liked to have made a present to Dame Thérèse ; he fumbled ceaselessly in his empty pockets, thinking by what means he could get some money. For a moment he had an idea of going back to the public-house and selling Bruno's saddle and bridle to the first Jew who happened to pass ; but Hans Aden having remained behind, another inspiration came into his head.

“ Maître Frantz,” he said, “ take hold of Schimel’s bridle ; I’ll be back directly.”

He then hurried to Hans Aden, and said to him—

“ Monsieur Mayor, I have forgotten my purse at the public-house, for my illustrious master and I have our money in Bruno’s saddle ; lend me ten francs ; I’ll return them to you by-and-by.”

“ With pleasure,” said Hans Aden, pulling a somewhat wry face—“ with pleasure ;” and he gave him ten francs.

Coucou Peter, now as proud as a cock, took Dame Thérèse under his arm, and led her to the handsomest stall.

“ Dame Thérèse,” he cried, “ choose whatever you like. Will you have this shawl, these ribbons, this fichu ?—will you have all the shop ? Don’t hesitate.”

She did not want to accept anything but a simple rose-coloured ribbon, but he forced her to take a superb shawl.

“ Oh, Monsieur Coucou Peter,” she said, “ let me have the ribbon.”

“Keep both the ribbon and the shawl, Dame Thérèse! Keep them for love of me,” he cried in a low tone; “if you only knew how much pleasure it gives me!”

He bought also a sugar dog for the child, then some gilt filberts, then a little drum—and indeed did not leave off buying till his ten francs were spent to the last centime. He then appeared in his glory; and when Hans Aden rejoined them, he was well pleased to see that Coucou Peter had shown such attention to his wife.

As for the philosopher, the sight of this great assemblage strangely exalted him; he wished to begin to preach, and every moment exclaimed—

“Coucou Peter, I think it is time to preach. Look at this crowd—what a magnificent occasion for announcing the doctrine!”

“Don’t think of it, Maître Frantz—don’t think of it for a moment! Here’s the gendarme going by—he’d have you in his grip at once; none but quacks have the right of preaching in the fair.”

In this way they made the circuit of the market-place three times. Dame Thérèse purchased all she needed for her housekeeping: a scrubbing-brush, some tin ladles, a slice, and other articles of a like kind; Hans Aden bought a scythe that gave a clear ringing sound, some wooden shoes, and a currycomb.

Towards ten o’clock Schimel’s panniers were full of things; the crowd became more and more numerous, and raised clouds of dust; in the distance was heard the whirling waltz.

In making their way towards the Three Roses, they passed by the Madame Hutte, and such sounds of

gaiety fell upon their ears that tall Hans Aden himself stopped to look at the spectacle.

A flag floated above the booth; girls and youths flocked to the door; the pretty dress of the Kokesbergers, with their hair-plaits decked with ribbons; that of the women of Bouren-Grédel, with their watered-silk neckties hanging down the back of the neck, their red petticoats, their well-fitting white stockings, and high-heeled shoes; the mountaineers in their broad-brimmed hats ornamented with an oak leaf; the Alsatians, in three-cornered hats, square-tailed coats, scarlet waistcoats, and short breeches, presented an admirable picture. The crowd was drawn towards this point.

Dame Thérèse felt an inexpressible desire to dance; her hand trembled on the arm of Coucou Peter, who looked up at her tenderly, and whispered—

“Dame Thérèse, shall we have a waltz?”

“I should like it,” she murmured, “but the child—I dare not leave it; and besides—what would Hans Aden say?”

“Bah!—don’t be uneasy, Dame Thérèse; a waltz is soon over. The child has nothing to fear—he’s so sound asleep!”

“No, Monsieur Coucou Peter, I dare not! Hans Aden would not like it.”

They were discussing the matter in this manner, and Dame Thérèse would have given way perhaps, when the church-bells began to ring, and it was no longer to be thought of.

“Thérèse,” said Hans Aden, “there’s the third stroke; let us get back to the public-house, or we shall be late.”

“No need for that, Monsieur Mayor,” replied Coucou

Peter; "you can go from here. I'll take Schimel back, and we'll wait dinner for you.—You'll do us the favour to accept dinner, Maître Hans Aden and Dame Thérèse?"

Hans Aden thought Monsieur Coucou Peter a very good fellow, and Dame Thérèse took from Schimel's pannier the shawl he had bought for her; she put it on, and as she did so she cast a tender look at the good fiddler, who felt the tears come into his eyes. She then took up her child, from which she would not part company, especially as the benediction of St. Florent could do it nothing but good, and, all being arranged, the party separated in front of the chuch.

Coucou Peter took the lower road, so as not to meet the faithful in the Rue du Tonnelet Rouge.

Mathéus gravely followed him, allowing his eyes to wander, and recapitulating his invincible proofs. The pealing of the bells shook the air; the bright sun, casting its rays upon the moving crowd, all astonished the good man; and the hope of shortly preaching made him see everything from an agreeable point of view.

They were passing along by gardens on the slope of the hill; from time to time they heard the report of a gun, and saw puffs of smoke rolling in the air; the noise of the crowd died away insensibly, and fresh grass replaced the dust of the streets.

Turning round by the fountain where the cattle of the town were brought to drink, he saw sportsmen, gamekeepers in green dresses, and a good number of peasants contesting for the prize of a sheep.

The target was placed on the opposite side of the hill in front of a large oak; shooters standing behind garden rails tried their guns, put the locks on full-cock,

shook their heads ; some betted, others threw themselves into attitudes as though they were playing at skittles ; and each thought himself cleverer than the one who missed his mark.

Frantz Mathéus, whom the sound of a gun always made tremble, hurried by into Acacia Lane, the solitude of which, after so many tumultuous scenes, had a strange charm. All the inhabitants of Haslach were at church.

At the last sound of the church-bells the firing was repeated ; the prelude of the organ was heard from a distance. Maître Frantz and his disciple turned into the Rue du Tonnelet Rouge in front of the Three Roses.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Coucou Peter led Schimel to the stable, Mathéus, fatigued with walking about in the fair, entered the public-house. The illustrious philosopher was far from expecting the magnificent picture that met his view: from one end to the other of the principal room stretched a table covered with a cloth of white linen with a red border; more than forty covers were laid, and each cover had its clean stiff finger-napkin, folded in the shape of a boat or of a mitre; they all looked almost new, and as if they had just been taken from the linen-press. Besides these, each cover had its bottle of sound Alsace wine; and at regular intervals large water-bottles, transparent as crystal, reflected the windows, the sky, and the surrounding objects.

Add to this, that the floor, washed overnight, was sprinkled with fine sand; that the air freely circulated through the half-open windows; that the smell of roast meat came in puffs from a small window opening into the kitchen; that the clinking of plates and dishes, the "tic-tac" of the roasting-jack, the crackling of the fire on the hearth, all combined to announce a great feast at thirty sous a head; and you may imagine with what pleasure Maître Frantz seated himself by one of the small tables, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and awaited the hour of dinner.

Not a soul disturbed the quiet of the dining-room, for it was well known that the Three Roses would have a great crowd of guests on that solemn day, and that nobody would receive any attention who went there merely for a mug or two of wine.

For some time the illustrious philosopher gave himself up to the enjoyment of this delightful repose ; he then drew from his coat-pocket the Synopsis of his *Anthropo-Zoology*, and began to search for a text worthy of the occasion.

Now, Mother Jacob, who had heard the door open, looked through the little window from the kitchen, and seeing a grave-looking man reading a book, remained for a moment contemplating him ; she then made a sign to her fat servant Orchel to come to her, and pointing to the illustrious philosopher, seated with his elbow on the window-ledge in a meditative posture, asked her if he didn't resemble the old curé Zacharias, who had died five years before.

Orchel declared it was himself. Little Katel, who was at the moment attending to the dripping-pan, flew to see what was going on ; she could hardly repress a cry of surprise. There was a great flutter in the kitchen ; each by turn peered through the little window, and murmured : “It’s him !”—“It’s not him !” At length Mother Jacob, having looked at him very attentively, told Katel to go and mind her dripping-pan, and, smoothing her grey hair under her cap, went into the dining-room.

The illustrious philosopher was so absorbed that he did not hear the door open, and Mother Jacob was obliged to ask him what he desired, to attract his attention.

“ What I desire, my good woman,” said Mathéus, gravely—“ what I desire you cannot give me. He alone who sees and governs us from the high heavens, He whose immutable will is the law of the universe, can alone accord to me, in this supreme moment, the inspiration which I ask of Him. I tell you truly—truly, great events are preparing. Let those who feel themselves guilty, either through weakness or ignorance, humiliate themselves!—let them see their faults, and they shall be forgiven them! But let sophists, people full of pride, profane and incapable of noble and generous feelings, and, I say, even of any sort of justice—let sophists and sensualists, who, plunging deeper and deeper in materialism, go so far even as to deny the immortal soul, the principle of human morality and of human society—let them tremble: there is for ever a deep gulf between us!”

Mother Jacob, who reproached herself for not having joined the procession for the last three years, thought that Maître Frantz was reading her heart.

“ Good gracious!” she cried in alarm, “ I see my faults; I know well I ought to have gone in the procession, but our house can’t be left to itself. I’m obliged to see to it myself, and particularly to look after the kitchen.”

“ The kitchen!” cried Mathéus. “ Is it for the kitchen you neglect the great question of the transformation of bodies and the peregrination of souls? Oh! my good woman, you are much to be pitied! Why do you amass vain riches at the price of your immortal soul? For your children?—you have none. For yourself, then?—Alas! life endures but an instant, and you can scarcely enjoy it. For your heirs?—Is there any need

for developing in them a love of the worthless goods of the earth, from which spring cupidity, avarice, and covetousness, which too often draw us to wish for the death of those nearest to us?"

"This man knows everything," thought Mother Jacob. "He knows that I have no children; he knows that my rascal of a nephew, who has left the Carabineers, only waits till I am dead to inherit all that I possess; and he knows that for three years I have not attended the procession. He's a prophet!"

Thus was Mother Jacob reasoning when the procession commenced. A great clamour rose amidst the universal silence; then the sounds of the church-organ and singing were heard. Then, suddenly, the singing entered the market-place: the shrine of St. Florent, borne by young girls dressed in white, the cross, the banner floating in the air, the curés of the neighbourhood in full-dress, the choristers in red caps appearing in the distance, then the noisy procession. But, instead of taking the Rue du Tonnelet Rouge, it made the tour of Haslach, according to the ancient custom directed by St. Florent himself; and the valley was filled with that low murmurous sound which the illustrious philosopher had admired on the mountain: "Pray for us!—pray for us!" It was like a great burst of wind in the woods mingled with the resounding peals of the bells; it was something immense.

"Oh, grand and splendid sight, truly worthy of man!" cried Mathéus. "Admirable meeting of people mingling their various thoughts in one sole thought, their souls in the universal soul! Oh, noble and affecting image of the future!—What then will it be when the entire truth shall have resounded through the world; when,

rising on the wings of transcendental logic, and soaring towards the heavens, humanity will see, face to face, the Being of Beings, the Great Demiourgos ! To what a boundless height of enthusiasm will not men rise, since they are even now carried so far by a mere presentiment of the truth !”

Speaking thus, the illustrious philosopher grew more and more animated. But Mother Jacob had for a long time quitted the dining-room, and was going from door to door among her neighbours, saying that a prophet had arrived at her house, that this prophet knew everything, that he had told her all about herself—that she had no children, that her nephew, Yeri Hans, coveted her property, and that the time was near!—that he knew our most secret thoughts, and worked miracles !

Orchel and Katel had also deserted their posts and followed at Mother Jacob’s heels, supporting, confirming, and embellishing all she said.

They would have left everything to burn, if Coucou Peter, by an inspiration from above, had not gone into the kitchen and seen the forsaken boilers. In holy horror he had basted the roast-meats, looked to saucepans, skimmed the stew, stirred the sauces, re-wound the roasting-jack, put bread into the soup, took the *küchlen* out of the oven and arranged all the dishes in proper order, calling, shouting, and exerting himself. But nobody answered him. At last, at the end of half an hour, not being able to do any more, he went down into the yard to wash his hands and face, for he did not wish to appear in such a state before little Thérèse.

At the same moment, Mother Jacob and her neighbours arrived ; and finding everything cooked to a turn and arranged in perfect order, ready to be served up, the

good women raised their hands to heaven and cried—
“A miracle!”

Hearing the tumult in the kitchen, Coucou Peter immediately returned ; and what was his surprise when Mother Jacob, leading him to the little window, pointed out Mathéus to him, and related the miracle which the good man had worked !

He was on the point of bursting into a boisterous fit of laughter ; but suddenly he pressed his sides and drew in his cheeks.

“Ah !” he cried, “is it possible ? That’s what I saw, then !”

The neighbours all pressed about him and inquired what he had seen. Then Coucou Peter gravely related that, having passed by the kitchen-door, he had seen a white form—a sort of angel—turning a spit.

“I saw it as plainly as I see you,” he said to Mother Jacob.

And the good women all looked at one another in mute astonishment. Not one of them had courage to answer a word ; they stole out on tiptoe without making the least noise, and news of the miracle quickly spread throughout Haslach.

When the time arrived for serving up the dinner, Mother Jacob hardly thought herself worthy to touch the lid of one of the saucepans ; every moment she turned her head, fancying the angel was behind her, and her two servants were equally flurried.

In this manner Coucou Peter, for the sake of insuring the triumph of the doctrine, deceived the whole town of Haslach, and precipitated the illustrious Doctor Frantz Mathéus, his master, into a new series of extraordinary and marvellous adventures.

CHAPTER XIII.

PRECISELY at noon the procession was finished. The curés, the choristers, the beadles, the women, children, townspeople, and pilgrims, mingled together, re-entered Haslach—some to sit down to a good dinner moistened with white wine, beer, and coffee ; others to eat their provisions on the corner of a fountain, or on the stone bench outside a public-house.

The illustrious philosopher felt that the time to preach was come.

Coucou Peter, coming into the dining-room, said to him—

“ Master, sit down at the head of the table ; I’ll place myself on your right hand, to sustain the doctrine.”

Frantz Mathéus seated himself at the place pointed out to him by his disciple, at the head of the table, in front of the windows.

The room was very quickly filled by a crowd of people, come from all parts of Alsace and Lorraine—all worthy peasants who lodged at the Three Roses, and thought nothing of thirty sous for a good dinner. There were also some mountaineers, amongst whom were Dame Thérèse and Hans Aden ; these seated themselves on the right of Coucou Peter, who took in his left hand the large horn-handled carving-knife and fork to cut up the joints.

Soup having been served, the dinner began in silence.

Dame Thérèse, with her child upon her knees, appeared very happy in being near Coucou Peter, who attended to her with the greatest care, and gave her the nicest pieces.

Now the news of Mathéus and his miracle having spread through Haslach, people from all quarters hastened to the Three Roses, and stared into the dining-room through the windows, demanding to see the prophet. Mother Jacob, from the doorstep, told them all that had happened, and the servants, left alone, were hardly able to serve the dinner. Katel hurried round the table, arranging the dishes, removing the plates, and replacing the emptied bottles ; while Orchel brought the dishes from the kitchen.

The dining-room became more and more animated ; the convives, ignorant of the sublime mission of the illustrious philosopher, chatted together on indifferent matters—of the fair, the harvest, the coming vintage. They ate, laughed, drank, called to the servants, who rushed up and down the winding stairs with dishes of sauer-kraut, saveloys, smoking sausages, roast legs of mutton, ducks swimming in their own gravy, and little sucking-pigs covered with beautiful golden-yellow crackling.

In the midst of this joyous animation, Maître Frantz thought he heard these prophetic words :—“ Honour ! glory ! Honour to the great Mathéus ! Eternal glory to the inventor of the peregrination of souls ! Glory ! glory ! honour ! glory ! Honour to the great Mathéus ! Eternal glory to the inventor of the peregrination of souls ! ” And in mute ecstasy he leaned back in his chair, dropped his fork, and listened to these far-off

voices; but, in truth, this was but the effect of the Eckersthal wine and the noisy hum of the room.

It was about two o'clock, and the moment for the dessert had arrived—that moment when everybody speaks at once and nobody listens, when every one thinks himself witty, and first one and then another laughs, without knowing why.

At that moment the illustrious Doctor rose at the end of the table, and gravely began to explain the transformation of bodies and the peregrination of souls. He spoke calmly and said—

“ Justice is the law of the universe; being, from the beginning of time, was subjected to the law of justice; all things have been made by it, and nothing that has been made has been made without it. It was life, and life was will; and will animated matter, whence came plants, whence came animals, whence came man !

“ There was a man sent by Heaven, named Pythagoras: he came into the world, and the world has not understood him—his doctrines have not been understood !”

Thus spoke the illustrious philosopher, and all present listened in astonishment at his wisdom. But amongst the number there was an old Anabaptist named Pelsly, a God-fearing man; and this venerable person was outraged by the doctrine of the illustrious philosopher. So, raising one of his fingers with an inspired air, he cried—

“ Now, the Spirit says expressly, that in the time to come some will abandon the faith, following erring minds and diabolical doctrines, taught by impostors filled with hypocrisy, and with consciences darkened by crime !”

Having pronounced these words he relapsed into

silence. Everybody felt that he referred to Frantz Mathéus.

The illustrious philosopher turned pale, for he heard a murmur rise about him. Coucou Peter became as red as a burning coal.

But quickly recovering all his strength, Maître Frantz responded—

“ Oh ! impostors and unbelievers, dare you really deny that Justice should be the law of the world ? Were not all beings equal before some had advanced by merit ? If they had not existed before being born, why all the differences among them ? Why should one be born as a plant, another as a man, or an animal ? Why should one be born rich, another poor, stupid or intelligent ? Where would be the justice of God, if all these differences did not come from merit or demerit in anterior existences ?”

The Anabaptist, far from allowing himself to be vanquished by this invincible argument, once again raised his long skinny finger, and said—

“ Flee from impertinent and puerile fables, and exercise yourself in piety ; for piety is of use to all, since to it have been promised the means of present and future life. What I say to you is a certain truth, and worthy to be received with entire submission ; for that which enables us to bear ills and outrages is that we hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, but principally of the faithful.”

At these words the persons assembled appeared greatly disturbed, and Mathéus saw afresh threatening looks turned towards him. The illustrious philosopher, in this critical position, raised his eyes towards heaven, and cried—

“ Being of Beings ! O Great Demiourgos ! Thou whose powerful will and immutable justice govern all souls, deign—deign to enlighten this mind, obscured by the veil of error and of prejudice !”

But the Anabaptist Pelsly, furious at this, cried—

“ Is it not you, Spirit of Darkness, who seeks to obscure our intelligence ? Is it not written : ‘ If any one teach a doctrine different to this, and embrace not the doctrine according to piety, he is puffed up with pride, and he knows nothing ; he is possessed of an evil mind, which carries him into questions and combats of words, which give birth to envy, contestation, scandal, and evil suspicions ? ’ ”

The illustrious Doctor knew no more what to answer, when Coucou Peter plunged into the dispute ; for he had sold Bibles and almanacs, and knew as much about the Scriptures as the Anabaptist.

“ But,” cried he, striking the table with his fist, and looking at the Anabaptist with glaring eyes—“ but ‘ there is nothing hidden which may not be discovered, nothing secret which may not be found out ; for that which you have said in the darkness shall be published in the light, and that which you have whispered in chambers shall be proclaimed from the housetop ! ’ I say to you, then, Pelsly, hypocrite that you are !—‘ You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth ; but how is it that you do not discern this time ? And why even of yourself judge you not what is right ? ’ ”

Coucou Peter had hardly finished speaking these words when a great tumult was heard within the house, and everybody looked at one another, asking—

“ What is the matter ?—what is the meaning of all this noise ? ”

Now it was old Margredel, the paralytic wife of Nikel Schouler the weaver, who, having been told of the miracles performed by the illustrious philosopher, had come to be cured. The poor woman, seated in her large arm-chair, which she had not quitted for two years, was carried on the shoulders of four pilgrims. A crowd pressed about her, crying—

“Courage, Margredel! Courage!”

Margredel smiled sadly, for she believed in the prophet, and already felt life stirring within her.

On arriving in front of the Threé Roses, Mother Jacob, who had seen her coming, opened the outer folding-doors—then that of the great dining-room.

Poor Margredel, such as her malady had made her, was then seen, pale, emaciated, raising her thin hands supplicatingly, and crying—

“Save me, Mr. Prophet!—deign to cast a look upon your humble servant!”

And the crowd pressed into the passage, against the windows, and even into the room, repeating the same words. The confusion was extreme.

Seeing this, Coucou Peter wished to make his escape; for he had no confidence in the miracles of the doctrine, and was afraid of being stoned if his master did not cure the poor woman.

The illustrious philosopher, however, far from feeling any doubt, had such confidence in his mission, he at once said to himself that the Being of Beings had sent this unfortunate creature for the purpose of enabling him to give to the universc a shining proof of the truths of Anthropo-Zoology. Penetrated with this confidence, he rose and advanced towards Margredel, who watched his approach with wide-open eyes. The crowd made

way for him, and Maître Frantz having arrived in front of the paralytic, looked at her with great tenderness, and said to her, in the midst of the most profound silence—

“Woman! have you confidence in the Being of Beings—in His infinite goodness?”

Raising her eyes to heaven, Margredel replied, in a feeble voice—

“God, who sees into all hearts, knows how truly I believe.”

“Well, then,” cried Mathéus, firmly, “faith has saved you! Rise up—you are cured!”

At these words, which came from his soul, all present trembled to the very marrow of their bones. Margredel felt an extraordinary strength pass into all her limbs; she made an effort—rose—and then fell upon her knees, weeping, at the feet of Mathéus.

“I am saved!” she cried; “I am saved!”

It was an affecting sight to see this poor woman at the good man’s feet, who, smiling kindly upon her, lifted her up and kissed her on her shrunken cheeks, saying—

“That’s well—that’s well; return to your dwelling.”

Which she did immediately, crying—

“My poor children!—my poor children! I shall no longer be a burden on you!”

Maître Frantz then turned towards the company, and said calmly—

“It was God’s will—who dares to deny the power of God?”

These words struck all present with admiration, and Coucou Peter himself was so overcome by what he had seen and heard, that, in his bewilderment, he could

not move from his chair, and cried in a tremulous voice—

“Master! I am not worthy to untie the strings of your shoes! Master! you are a great prophet, a true prophet! Have pity on your poor disciple Coucou Peter—a being sensual and full of defects—who has doubted you!”

The Anabaptist alone was unconvinced; he tore his skirts and left the room, crying—

“And in that day he raised up false prophets, who performed great prodigies and things astonishing, even to the seduction, if possible, of the elect themselves!”

But the crowd would not listen to him, and did not cease to praise Maître Frantz for the wonders he had accomplished.

CHAPTER XIV

IT was thus that the illustrious Doctor Mathéus, knowing the power of will, exhibited the greatness of the Being of Beings.

Margredel returned to her home, and the crowd proclaimed the miracle throughout Haslach. Her neighbours, and those who saw her afterwards seated at her door, said—

“Isn’t that Margredel, the paralytic, seated on her doorstep warming herself in the sun?”

“Some answered—“Yes, it is her.” Others said—“No, it’s some one else, like her.” But she cried—“It’s myself! The prophet at the Three Roses has cured me!”

People from all quarters hurried to the Three Roses; they abandoned the churches to go and see and hear the prophet.

Frantz Mathéus stood at one of the dining-room windows, watching this spectacle, and enjoying indescribable pleasure.

“O Great Demiourgos,” he cried to himself, “I thank Thee! I thank Thee for having permitted me to live until this day! Frantz Mathéus may now die; he has seen the triumph of Anthropo-Zoology!”

Meanwhile, the Anabaptist Pelsly had gone to the Mayor of Haslach to denounce the illustrious philosopher.

Monsieur George Brenner, the mayor, was seated at table, surrounded by his friends, celebrating the Fair Sunday with gaiety and feasting, when the Anabaptist entered.

The Anabaptist related, calmly and truthfully, the prodigious circumstances that had taken place.

“These men,” he said, “having known God, have not glorified Him as God, and have not rendered thanks to Him; but they have bewildered themselves in their vain reasonings, and their senseless hearts have become filled with darkness. They have lost their wits by attributing to themselves the name of sages; they have transferred the honour which belongs truly to the incorruptible God to the image of a corruptible man, and to the figures of animals, fourfooted beasts, and reptiles; wherefore God has given them up to the desires of their hearts, to the vices of impurity; so that by plunging into these they have dishonoured their own bodies, put falsehood in the place of God’s truth, and rendered unto the creature adoration and sovereign worship, instead of rendering them unto the Creator, who is blessed in all ages!”

Thus spoke Pelsly the Anabaptist; and the mayor, striking the table before him, cried—

“What is it you tell me? Are such things possible?”

“Come and see for yourself,” replied the Anabaptist.

The mayor rose, and left his wife, children, and friends in a very ill temper; for since the return of the procession he had not been able to enjoy a single moment’s repose, and several persons had already spoken to him about the miracles—not that of Margredel, but that which had been wrought in Mother Jacob’s kitchen.

On reaching the Rue du Tonnelet Rouge he found

much difficulty in proceeding, so great was the crowd of people shouting—

“Glory! Honour to the prophet!”

In the distance the illustrious Doctor was to be seen at the window, surrounded by Coucou Peter, tall Hans Aden, and all the guests of the Three Roses, eloquently haranguing the crowd.

The mayor succeeded in forcing his way through the mob, however, and Coucou Peter suddenly caught sight of him ascending the steps of the public-house.

This was a terrible shock to the brave fiddler, for he at once saw that the doctrine was about to incur a great danger.

Maître Frantz was still speaking when the mayor entered the dining-room, and then the Anabaptist, pointing to the illustrious philosopher, accused him in these terms:—

“As it is through you, Mr. Mayor, that we enjoy profound peace, and because several highly salutary orders have been given by your wise foresight, we accuse this man of being the leader of a seditious sect, of bringing division and trouble into this town, of teaching false doctrines, and of performing miracles.”

Astonished at hearing this accusation pronounced in a loud and solemn tone of voice, Frantz Mathéus turned, and seeing the mayor girt with his official scarf, was terrified.

“By whom have you been permitted to perform miracles and preach in public?” demanded the mayor.

The illustrious philosopher was at first unable to answer; but after a few seconds he recovered his courage, and said, with deep indignation—

“ Since when has permission been required to teach the truth? Oh, horrible profanation, worthy of the most rigorous chastisement and of the execration of ages! Had Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and many others, need of permission to teach their doctrines? Were they not followed by their disciples, surrounded by the respect, admiration, and enthusiasm of entire peoples?”

Bewildered by this tirade, the mayor looked at the good man for a few moments, and then said—

“ It’s fortunate for you that we have no communal prison, otherwise I would have had you taken to it at once, to teach you to speak with respect to a magistrate wearing his scarf. I give you twenty minutes to take yourself out of this town, and if you stay here one second longer, I’ll have you marched to Saverne between two gendarmes.”

The guests all looked at one another in amazement, and Coucou Peter, turning to the Anabaptist, who triumphed in his turn, said to him, in a tone of disdainful eloquence—

“ It is said, ‘ They will deliver you to the magistrates to be tormented, and you will be banished on account of justice.’ ”

And those present, not less indignant than the disciple of Mathéus, would have fallen upon the Anabaptist but for the presence of the mayor.

The illustrious philosopher had had time to recover himself, however; and as his heart swelled with pain in thinking that he was about to lose the fruit of so many efforts and sacrifices, he resolved to defend himself.

“ Mr. Mayor,” he said, with forced calmness—“ Mr.

Mayor, I shall with more confidence attempt to justify myself, knowing that for several years you have governed this province. You can without difficulty ascertain that I have not been more than one day in Haslach, and that this Anabaptist has not found me disputing with anybody, nor getting the people together, either in the churches, the temples, or in the public places. He is not able to prove one of the charges he has brought against me. It is true, and I admit it before you, that I serve the God of Pythagoras, hoping in Him as the Anabaptist himself hopes, and knowing Him as he knows Him. For this it is that I labour incessantly, to preserve my conscience exempt from reproaches; and as it commands me to spread the light by all possible means, I have set forth with this honourable purpose, quitting the roof of my fathers, my friends, and all that is dearest to me in the world, to fulfil my duties. Allow me, then, to remain in this place only one day longer—I ask no more—to convert the whole town to the truths of Anthropo-Zoology."

"The more reason why you should be sent away at once," interrupted the mayor; "instead of twenty minutes, I'll not allow you more than ten." Turning to the Anabaptist, "Pelsly," he said, "go and fetch the gendarmes."

At these words Frantz Mathéus felt his hare nature gain the upper hand.

"Oh, Mr. Mayor, Mr. Mayor!" he cried, his eyes filling with tears, "posterity will severely judge you!"

He went from the room in silence.

For some few moments all present were saddened by this scene. Coucou Peter's eyes wandered dolefully

over the table, and he did not know what course to take. Suddenly he drew himself up, and in a loud tone cried—

“ Posterity will severely judge you, Mr. Mayor! So much the worse for you.”

This said, he cocked his hat upon his ear, crossed his hands behind his back, and walked majestically out by the same door as *Maître Frantz*.

After the departure of *Coucou Peter* there was a great uproar. *Jacob Fischer*, a sensual man and naturally covetous of money, recollected that *Coucou Peter* and *Mathéus* had lodged in the outhouse, that they had given *Bruno* two feeds of oats, and that they had not only themselves dined at thirty sous apiece, but that *Hans Aden* and *Thérèse* had dined also at their expense.

He hurried after *Coucou Peter*, therefore, crying—

“ Stop! stop! You are not going off in that manner, without paying.”

Everybody followed the landlord, impressed by a singular curiosity to see what further was going to happen.

On reaching the steps into the yard, they saw *Maître Frantz* coming from the outhouse, leading *Bruno* by the bridle, and behind him *Coucou Peter*, with the saddle, valise, and other things, hastening to get all ready for departure, for he apprehended that an attempt might be made to detain them.

Jacob Fischer uttered an exclamation of indignation, and sprang down the steps four at a time.

“ You are not going off so!” he cried. “ I shall detain this horse as security.”

And, filled with anger, he tried to stop *Bruno*; but

Coucou Peter, pushing him back roughly, seized a stick from behind the stable door, and exclaimed—

“Stand back! There is nothing in common between you and me!”

Jacob Fischer hung on to the bridle, and Mathéus said gently—

“Put back your stick behind the door, my dear disciple—put this stick back into its place.”

Coucou Peter looked as if he were disinclined to obey; but when he saw the crowd stream down the steps into the yard, he remembered the psychological lessons of Oberbronn and gave in.

Almost at the same moment a number of people surrounded the horse, the illustrious philosopher, and his disciple. Each one related the occurrence in his own manner, and Mathéus was deeply distressed at hearing all these cries, speeches, and explanations; for if some approved, others highly blamed him for wishing to go away without paying.

Among the crowd were Jacob Fischer and his wife, big Orchel and little Katel, Hans Aden and Dame Thérèse, Kasper-Siébel, the son of Ludwig-Siébel the blacksmith, Passauf the garde champêtre, in his large gendarme's hat, the Anabaptist Pelsly, and the mayor in tri-coloured scarf. There was a great tumult.

At length the mayor succeeded in obtaining silence, and Jacob Fischer then stated the case.

“These people,” he said, “owe me for lodging in the outhouse, for four dinners at thirty sous, and two feeds of oats; that makes seventeen francs. If they go off, where are they? I know nothing of them. Coucou Peter never has a sou. I demand that the horse shall be left in pledge.”

Mathéus replied—

“In all times prophets have been furnished with victuals and drink in the houses of their hosts, who considered themselves fortunate in being able to entertain them; and when their doors have been closed against them, they have shaken the dust from their feet and betaken themselves elsewhere. And I say that such obdurate-hearted men are greatly to be pitied: it would have been better for them never to have come into the world, since they do nothing but pain us by the sight of their iniquities.”

In spite of this eloquent address, neither the mayor nor Jacob Fischer appeared to be convinced; on the contrary, the publican repeated the items of his bill: so much for the horse, so much for the illustrious philosopher and his disciple, so much for their guests; in all, seventeen francs.

The mayor, seeing that the clamour was increasing, said—

“Jacob, take the horse and retain it as security. They’ll have to go on foot, that’s all”

The landlord instantly snatched the bridle from Mathéus’s hands, and the good man, who was quite unprepared for the shock, nearly fell to the ground; but he clung to Bruno’s neck, and enfolding it in his arms sobbed like a child.

“Bruno!—my poor Bruno!” he cried. “They wish to separate you from me—you, the companion of my toils—you, my best, my only friend! Oh, do not be so cruel! Bruno! my poor Bruno! what will become of you, far from your master? They will ill-treat you—they will care nothing for your long services!”

The tears of the white-headed old man moved all the beholders.

“It *is* cruel,” they said among themselves, “to take this poor old man’s horse from him. He’s not dishonest—see how he weeps; it’s only good-hearted people who love animals in that way!”

Several women, who had come like the others, with their children in their arms, hurried away, for they could not bear to see it.

Coucou Peter, behind Bruno, hung his head dejectedly; he accused himself of being the cause of all, and two big tears ran down his red cheeks. Dame Thérèse wept also; and as everybody was at a stand-still to prevent the landlord taking away the horse, this good little woman slipped behind Coucou Peter and put thirty francs into his hand unseen.

“Accept this, Monsieur Coucou Peter, for love of me,” she whispered.

Coucou Peter put the money into his waistcoat-pocket and sobbed more than ever; then, after a few moments, raising his head, he cried—

“Maître Jacob, I should not have thought this of you!—I should have thought you would have trusted an honest man! But since it’s as it is, here is your money—and let go this horse at once, or I’ll split your head open!”

He seized the stick again from behind the stable-door, and everybody would have been glad if he had belaboured that wretched publican.

Coucou Peter even repaid Hans Aden, casting upon Thérèse so tender a look that she felt embarrassed to the bottom of her soul; he also kissed the child which

she held in her arms. Then, in a loud ringing voice, he cried—

“Forward, Maître Frantz! forward! Men are rascals!”

Mathéus mounted on horseback, Coucou Peter threw open the gate into the field, and the mayor felt at ease only after seeing them disappear in the forest of Saverne.

A great uproar then arose in the town; the prophet was called for, and the crowd demanded miracles!

CHAPTER XV

It is impossible to describe the dejection of Frantz Mathéus and his disciple after they had left Haslach.

Coucou Peter could no longer control his anger ; at every step he flourished his stick and exclaimed—

“ Rascally Anabaptist ! rascally mayor ! rascally Jacob Fischer ! Ah, you scamps ! if I only had you here, I’d make you dance ! I would not leave a hair on your heads ! To drive out so worthy a man !—a man who performs miracles !—a man worth more than all of you to the twentieth generation ! Scamps ! vagabonds ! it’ll be a lucky day for you if I meet you sooner or later !”

Thus spoke Coucou Peter, turning a backward glance from time to time, to see that no gendarmes were following on their track.

The illustrious philosopher uttered not a word, but buried himself in his sorrow. It was not until much later, when they had reached the village of Tieffenbach, in one of the gorges of the mountain, that the good man appeared to recover himself. Then, raising his broad-brimmed hat, and wiping the perspiration from his streaming forehead, he said with singular calmness—

“ Dear disciple, we have passed through a very rude trial ; let us return thanks to the Demiourgos who, as ever, has sheltered us beneath his ægis. In vain

sophists pursue us with their insults, in vain they multiply obstacles and ambush themselves upon our path ; all that but serves the better to exhibit the protection of the Being of Beings, who builds on us the fairest hopes.”

“ You are right, Doctor,” replied Coucou Peter ; “ when people can perform miracles like us they have nothing to fear. Before six months are over, I’ll re-enter Haslach in a bishop’s hat on a white horse ; I’ll have two chorister-boys to carry the skirt of my robe, and others to burn incense under my nose ; but, in the meanwhile, I think there will be no harm in our learning where we are going.”

“ Let not that distress you, my dear friend,” replied the illustrious philosopher ; “ we shall always find room enough before us. If we have not hitherto been successful, it is because we require a vaster theatre ! You must observe that Providence has conducted us, in some measure against our inclinations, towards the larger towns ; let us go to Saverne !”

“ To Saverne !—mind what you are about ! Saverne’s a town full of lawyers and gendarmes !”

The good apostle said that because he had left his wife at Saverne, to say nothing of numerous debts to the brewers and publicans in general throughout the town ; but the illustrious Doctor listened to none of these objections.

“ Gendarmes are made for thieves,” he said, “ and not for philosophers ; let us go forward, Coucou Peter, let us go forward ; every moment of our existence belongs to human kind.”

They passed down the silent street of Ticffenbach ; most of the inhabitants were away at the fair of Has-

lach, and the small houses with their closed doors, their little gardens surrounded with disjointed palings, and their solitary moss-grown wells, had a melancholy look, very different from holiday gaiety and animation.

Coucou Peter appeared thoughtful.

“Tell me, Maître Frantz,” he said, “can rabbis marry?”

“Undoubtedly, my friend; it is a duty even, imposed on them by Moses, for the propagation of the species.”

“Yes; but the Chief Rabbi of the Peregrination of Souls?”

“Why not? Marriage is in the order of nature; I see nothing objectionable in it.”

Coucou Peter immediately appeared in better spirits.

“Doctor,” he said, “we were wrong to worry ourselves. The first thing we will do on reaching Saverne is to go to my wife; she must have saved something during five months.”

“Your wife!”

“Eh!—yes; my wife, Gredel Baltzen, married to Coucou Peter before the mayor and pastor of the town.”

“You never told me that.”

“Because you never asked me about it.”

“And you don’t live together?”

“No; she’s too thin—I like fat women—I can’t help it—it was born in me.”

“But then, why did you marry her?”

“I hadn’t then come to know my own taste; I was at the age of innocence, and this girl wheedled me. At last—this is how it was; seeing her every day growing thinner and thinner, I said to myself, Coucou Peter, you’re not of the same race, you’ll make a bad mixture; you’ll do better to take yourself off. So I took what there was in the cupboard and went off.

Conscience before everything ; it would have been too painful to have become the parent of skinny children ; I sacrificed myself."

This avowal surprised the illustrious philosopher ; but he was touched by the delicacy of his disciple, and more than all by his admirable anthropo-zoological sentiments.

" My friend," he said, " I cannot but approve the motive of your conduct. If, however, your wife was unhappy——"

" Bah, Maître Frantz ! she was only too glad to be rid of me. We could never agree ! when I said white she said black ; and that sort of thing always ended by the use of the stick. Besides, what is she in want of ? She is servant to Pastor Schweitzer, one of my old Strasbourg comrades, of the time when I was employed at a beerhouse and he was studying theology. How many times have I taken him into the cellar ! March beer ! strong beer ! foaming beer ! we passed all the barrels in review. Ha ! ha ! ha ! I can't help laughing when I think of it ! But to return to my wife ; she has twelve francs a month, board and lodging, with nothing to do but look after the house, mend the linen, make the soup, and read the children a chapter out of the Bible every evening, while the pastor smokes his pipe and takes his mug of beer at the casino. What woman wouldn't be happy leading such a life, especially as the pastor is a widower, and has never got married again ?"

" Certainly," replied Mathéus, absently, " certainly ; she must be very happy."

By this time they had reached the end of the village, and the illustrious philosopher observed a knot of

women gesticulating about some object lying on the ground.

The miller, a little man with hanging cheeks, a grey cap on his head, and white with flour from head to foot, was leaning on his door and speaking with remarkable animation.

In spite of the tic-tac of the mill, and the noise of the water rushing through the sluice, he could be heard exclaiming—

“Let them go to the devil! It’s no business of mine!”

Maitre Frantz and Coucou Peter went to see what was the matter. When they had come within a few paces the women moved away, and Mathéus saw an old gipsy woman lying against the wall, and apparently at the point of death. This old woman was so wrinkled and decrepid that she might have been a hundred years old; she said nothing, but a young gipsy on his knees beside her besought the miller to receive her into his barn.

The arrival of Mathéus had somewhat moderated this man’s rage.

“No, no,” he said, in a calmer tone; “the old woman might die, and all the expense of burying her would fall on me.”

The illustrious doctor, grieved at such a spectacle, went up to the door, and stooping towards the miller said gently to him—

“My friend, how can you refuse shelter to this unfortunate creature? Reflect that she may die for want of assistance. To what reproaches would you not subject yourself in the country around! Come, allow yourself to be moved by the prayer of this poor child.”

“Monsieur le curé,” replied the miller, taking off his cap, “if they were Christians, I wouldn’t refuse; but pagans—I can’t stand that!”

“What matters their philosophical opinions?” cried Maître Frantz. “Are we not all brothers? Have we not all the same wants, the same passions, the same origin? Believe me, my worthy man, give a truss of straw to this unhappy creature, and you will be fulfilling your duty, and the Being of Beings will recompense you for it.”

All the women sided with Mathéus, and the miller, for fear of provoking scandal, opened his barn; but he did it with so many maledictions against these vagabonds, who compelled the world to support them while they lived, and to bury them when they died, that no credit was due to him for his charitable action.

Coucou Peter noticed all this with his hands in his pockets and without speaking a word; but when Mathéus bowed to the good women and rode on his way, he suddenly asked—

“Maître Frantz, do you believe that old woman is very ill?”

“I fear so,” answered the good man, shaking his head. “I fear she will not live through the night.”

“Yet you saw how she got up without assistance when the barn was opened for her.”

“That is true, and I am still astonished at it,” replied Mathéus. “These gipsies must have very tough lives! It comes of the sober and primitive existence they lead in the midst of forests. They know nothing of the excesses of the table, neither of drink nor of labour, so injurious to other men. Thus lived our first parents.”

Coucou Peter could not help smiling.

“Maître Frantz,” he said, “with all due respect to you, I know enough of the gipsies to know that they never disdain anything good to eat, and that they drink a great deal more brandy than we do. As to working, you are right; they like better doing nothing than making themselves useful to humankind; not like we, who work for the future generations. Do you know what I think of that old woman?”

“What do you think of her, my friend?”

“I think she is no more ill than you or I; that, after trying all the doors in the town to see whether they were well fastened, this old swindler, finding there was nothing to take, has shammed ill for the purpose of getting into the mill. During the night she and the boy with her will get up quietly, creep into the fowl-house, wring the necks of the fowls, turkeys, and ducks, and to-morrow, before daylight, she’ll have vanished! That’s my notion.”

“How can you bring yourself to think such things?” cried the illustrious philosopher. “Oh, Coucou Peter! Coucou Peter! it’s very wrong to conceive such ideas against an entire race of men because those men have a skin a little yellower than our own, thicker lips, and brighter eyes!”

“No, Maître Frantz; it’s because they all without exception belong to the family of foxes,” said Coucou Peter, gravely.

“But will—cannot will change their evil instincts?” cried Mathéus, surprised to find himself embarrassed by his own system. “Are not all men perfectible? Are they to be considered as brutes? Doubtless they have animal appetites, which come to them from their original nature, but the Great Demiourgos has given

them at birth a superior faculty—moral sense—which enables them to distinguish the just from the unjust, and to combat instincts incompatible with the dignity of man."

"That would be all very well," said Coucou Peter, "if I hadn't known this old gipsy. It is not for nothing that her companions call her the Black Magpie; the older she grows the more she likes other people's property. I'm sure that, after her death, the Being of Beings will send her back with crooked fingers, as a reward for her good actions."

"But if that is the case, let us return to the village and warn the miller."

"Bah! what is the use of our mixing ourselves up in matters that do not concern us? Besides, in the first place, I'm not sure she may not be ill; in the next place, this miller is not a bit better than she, for he is the greatest stealer of flour I know. If the Black Magpie wrings the necks of his fowls, he has crunched the bones of many others. We need not trouble ourselves about that, Maître Frantz. I only wanted to tell you that these gipsies are of another race than ourselves; still this justice must be done them—that they never attack people on the road; they like to eat and drink at the expense of others, and, good faith, in that respect, they are not unlike some other people!"

While this conversation was proceeding, the illustrious philosopher and his disciple advanced farther and farther into the forest. Coucou Peter believed himself sure of the path, every moment expecting to see the house of the gamekeeper Yorich, one of his old comrades, where he proposed passing the night. But at the end of an hour, nothing coming in sight, doubts crossed his mind

as to the direction of the road, though he said nothing to Mathéus on the subject. After going on for another half-hour, the path becoming narrower and narrower, he no longer doubted having missed his way. It was about seven o'clock; brambles and thorns attached themselves to the clothes of Mathéus and his disciple; at length the path disappeared entirely, and lost itself in the midst of tall bushes.

"I say, Maître Frantz," then said the fiddler, "are you quite sure of this road?"

"Of this road!" cried Mathéus, stopping abruptly, "I don't know it at all."

"Then we are in a nice fix!—and I've been letting you lead me! What's to be done?"

"Let us go back," said the good man.

"But we haven't more than half an hour's daylight before us, and we've come two leagues from Tieffenbach; on the contrary, let us push forward—still forward; we must arrive somewhere."

They then looked at each other in silence, in the greatest uncertainty. The missel-thrushes called to each other from the tops of the pines; the setting sun spread its yellow hues on the foliage; the dull roar of the torrent in the valley was heard. They had remained for several minutes without exchanging a word, when Coucou Peter exclaimed—

"Hark, Maître Frantz;—do you hear nothing?"

"Yes, I hear voices down there," said the good man, pointing to the valley.

"And I fancy I smell smoke," replied Coucou Peter. "Sniff, Doctor."

"I think it is so," said the illustrious philosopher.

"I'm quite sure of it now," cried the disciple; "we

are not far from a charcoal-burner's. Which way does the wind come?—That way—forward!"

They had hardly gone fifty paces in the direction indicated, before they entered a deep valley, right opposite to where a troop of gipsies were preparing their cookery on the hillside.

"Hey!" cried Coucou Peter, "we shan't want for supper, Maître Frantz—we shan't want for supper!"

They walked towards the gipsies, who were much surprised to see a man on horseback in the depth of this solitude.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE nearer Frantz Mathéus approached the gipsies, the more he was struck by their joyous and truly philosophical appearance. It was easy to be seen that they cared little for the opinion of the world, and that they drew all their satisfaction from themselves. Some had clothes too large, others clothes much too small ; there were many more rents than whole pieces in their breeches, but that did not prevent them extending their legs with a certain nobility of action, or of looking you in the face as if they had been covered with magnificent embroideries. Almost all the women had children upon their backs in a kind of bag, which they carried slung over their shoulders. They went quietly about their business ; some put wood on the fire, others lit their pipes with a hot coal ; others, again, emptied their pockets, filled with crusts of bread, carrots, and turnips, into the cauldron. It was exquisitely picturesque to see this halt in the midst of the woods. The blue smoke rolled in masses through the valley, and in the distance the frogs, enjoying themselves amid the duckweed, were commencing their melancholy concert.

“ Eat and drink, worthy people !” cried Mathéus, taking off his broad-brimmed felt and saluting them ; “ all the fruits of the earth are made for man. Ah ! how I love to see Heaven’s creatures prosper and spread

before the face of the Great Demiourgos ! How I love to see them grow in strength, in wisdom, and in beauty !”

The gipsies looked suspiciously at the illustrious philosopher ; but hardly had they set eyes on Coucou Peter than several of them jumped up, crying—

“ Coucou Peter !—eh ! It’s Coucou Peter come to have some of our soup !”

“ That’s just what I’ve come for,” said the merry fiddler, shaking hands all round. “ Good evening, Wolf ; good evening, Pfifer-Karl ! Hallo ! Is that you, Daniel ? How are you ? And you, my little Nightingale, how long have you had this chick ? My eyes ! how everything increases and multiplies ! Let’s see if he’s the right kind : black eyes, curly hair. Very good ! all as it should be, and nobody can say a word in objection, Nightingale. Gipsies with blue eyes always strike me as deucedly suspicious ; they are like warren rabbits that taste of cabbage-leaf.”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha !” cried the gipsies, pressing about him ; “ Coucou Peter has always his joke !”

While this little scene was passing, Mathéus tied Bruno to one of the neighbouring trees ; when he turned round Coucou Peter was bending over the cauldron.

“ There’s no meat in the soup to-day,” he said, shaking his head.

“ No,” replied the Nightingale ; “ we are fasting in honour of Saint Florent.”

“ Oh !” said Coucou Peter ; “ a little patience—a little patience ; all the troop are not together yet.”

Then turning towards Mathéus—

“ No ceremony here, Maître Frantz,” he cried ; “ sit

you down by the fire, and make yourself at home. And you there, don't let your hands stray into the pockets of the illustrious philosopher."

"Do you take us for thieves?" asked a young gipsy, dressed in a long overcoat that hung down to his heels.

"On the contrary, Melchior, I look on you as the most honest people in the universe; only you have crooked fingers, and, in spite of yourselves, something is always hanging itself on to them."

Mathéus slowly approached and looked closely at the gipsies.

"Like the most virtuous Aristides," he said, in a grave tone, "an object of party hatred and victim to the ingratitude of my fellow-citizens, I come to seat myself by the fireside of a foreign nation, and to demand of you the sacred rights of hospitality. Happy is he who lives in solitude, in face of the immense heavens and of the boundless forests; he there sees not vice triumphant and virtue humiliated; his heart is not corrupted by selfishness nor withered by envy. Happiest of all is he who believes in eternal justice, for he will not be disappointed, but will receive the reward of his labours, of his courage, of his virtue!"

So spoke the good man; then, after seating himself by the fire, he appeared to lose himself in an abyss of meditations.

The astonished gipsies looked at one another, and asked, in whispers, who this man was, and what was the meaning of what he had been saying.

Coucou Peter thereupon undertook to relate to them the distant peregrinations of the illustrious philosopher, and the vicissitudes of his journey; but they could make nothing of it. Pfifer-Karl, the trombone, asked—

“ What does he want to do ? What is he going about the world for ? If he has got a house of his own and lands, and all that he needs, why doesn’t he stop at home ?—or, if he’s fond of travelling, why doesn’t he sell one of his fields to pay his travelling expenses ?”

These worthy people could not in the least understand what it was to be a prophet ; they laughed at Coucou Peter’s explanations, and as the illustrious Doctor did not stir from where he was sitting, and could not hear them, Coucou Peter finished by laughing at them himself.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! you rascal, Pfifer-Karl !” he cried, slapping the trombone on the shoulder, “ you are no fool—it isn’t you who would go about working for future generations ! Ha ! ha ! ha !—it’s a funny idea all the same !”

The gipsies strongly pressed him to take up his fiddle again and go with them to the fair ; for they had made more than one round with him in Alsace, and knew that he was everywhere well received. But he would not abandon the doctrine.

“ No,” he said, “ I am a prophet, and I shall remain a prophet ; it is a long time since I played any music. Besides, if I were to find out later that anybody else had taken my place of Grand Rabbi, I should tear my hair in despair. No, no—I want to get myself talked about ; I want the name of Coucou Peter to be like that of Pythagoras.”

“ When there’s a fool anywhere about he is always more talked of than all the sensible people in the country,” said Pfifer-Karl.

“ Yes,” replied Coucou Peter, laughing ; “ but fools of a new kind are rare. They are like six-legged sheep.

They are well fed, and shown for money, while the others are led shorn. I wish I had a leg in the middle of my back—my fortune would be made ; people would come from the ends of the earth to see me.”

Meanwhile the cauldron went on steaming and began to give out a most agreeable odour. They gathered round the fire, and the Nightingale, having washed her porringer at a neighbouring spring, offered it to Coucou Peter. He refused it, saying that he had dined too well to drink carrot-soup. Mathéus withdrew from the circle and said he was sleepy ; stale crusts of bread floating in clear water did not tempt his appetite.

The night was dark. Coucou Peter lit his pipe and watched the gipsies eating their portions, the porringer passing from hand to hand, each drinking out of it in his turn.

Maitre Frantz had seated himself on the heather. For some time the good man’s looks were turned to the dark valley ; he listened to the roar of a distant waterfall, which sometimes seemed to pause, and then slowly to increase again, like the noise of a storm. The entire valley responded to that solemn voice ; the leaves sighed, the birds chirped, the trees waved their black tops.

Suddenly a young gipsy began to sing a mountain ditty, which said—

“ Away, gipsies, away ! See, see ! the sun is rising behind the woods ! Take up your bag and pass along the great alley of trees to the village. It is long, that alley to the village ; you must set off early to arrive there in the morning-time.”

This child-voice faded in the immense valley—echoes answered it from afar—from very far off, in a

tenderer tone. Some women joined the child, seated near the fire, their hands interlaced in front of their knees, and they sang in chorus; then the men joined in the song, which was thus continually swelled with—“Away, gipsies, away.”

Insensibly Mathéus’ head drooped; at length he stretched himself on the moss and sank into a profound sleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE next day Mathéus awoke at an early hour ; a heavy dew was falling, and slowly penetrating his brown greatcoat ; the air was calm, and the valley misty.

The gipsies, already stirring, were preparing to start on their way before daylight ; they were loading themselves with their cauldron, their trombone, their French-horns, and their big drum ; the women arranged their bags on their shoulders ; the children settled down on the backs of their mothers. The vague murmur of the rain falling on the leaves of the trees alone broke the silence of the forest.

Coucou Peter, moist as a duck, had not quitted his place by the fire ; he was stirring some potatoes in the ashes, and appeared melancholy.

“ Well,” said Pfifer-Karl to him, “ if you want to go with us make up your mind.”

“ No ; I must go and preach at Saverne.”

“ Good luck to you, then, comrade—good luck to you !”

The Nightingale also shook hands with him. The whole band then started on its way. It moved away slowly through the tall woods ; pale rays illumined the horizon, rain streaked the air ; the gipsies were not depressed by it, but went on laughing and talking amongst themselves.

“ Good journey to you,” cried Coucou Peter.

Several turned and waved their hats ; and soon all of them had disappeared in the wood.

Coucou Peter then noticed the illustrious philosopher, who was sheltering himself under the turned-down brim of his wide hat.

“Hey, Mâitre Frantz!” he cried; “the blessing of the Being of Beings will make us grow in strength, wisdom, and beauty.”

“Yes, my good fellow,” replied Mathéus, “every day adds new trials and new merits to our glorious enterprise.”

He said this in a tone so gentle and resigned, that Coucou Peter felt touched by it.

“Doctor,” he said, “come here and taste my potatoes; they are as floury as chestnuts.”

“With pleasure—with pleasure,” replied the good man, seating himself beside his disciple.

“Gipsies are worthy people,” he said, taking a potato; “they think not of gathering together empty riches, but, living from day to day like the birds of the air, prefer their independence to all the false gains of the world. Have you not remarked, my good fellow, with what philosophical gaiety they eat their carrot-soup? Truly their way of living is not so disagreeable as it might be supposed to be.”

“You are right, Mâitre Frantz,” said Coucou Peter. “No longer ago than last year I travelled for three months with this very band; we went about playing dance-music at all the fairs in Alsace; we slept sometimes in a barn, sometimes under a rock in the open air, and I promise you we didn’t live on beech-mast and pine-cones, like squirrels; we had every day eggs, sausages, and bacon in abundance!”

“And who gave you all those good things?”

“Oh!” cried Coucou Peter, laughing, “while we

were playing our music at one end of the village, and all the women of the place were away at the dance, Nightingale, Black Magpie, and two or three more, slipped behind the gardens and into the houses: if they found anybody at home, they told their fortunes; but if there was nobody in sight, they nimbly whipped off the flax from over the fireplace, the bacon from the chimney; they laid hands on the butter, eggs, bread, and generally emptied all the cupboards, with the contents of which they stuffed their big pockets—for they always have pockets in their petticoats—and then made off to the woods. Ha! ha! ha! *Maître Frantz*,” cried the worthy apostle gaily, “you should have seen the peasants’ looks when they returned home! Ha! ha! ha! what faces they pulled! what faces they pulled! and what bastings they gave their wives! Ha! ha! ha!”

“How can you laugh?” cried *Maître Frantz*; “do you not know that you have led a very criminal life?”

“Oh! I had nothing to do with all that, doctor. I did nothing but play the fiddle. If the gipsies had been captured, who could have said anything against me?”

“But you partook of the fruits of their robberies: can you not distinguish between just and unjust?”

“Certainly I can—and the reason I parted from the band was because my conscience reproached me; every time I eat any of those good things, a voice within me cried, ‘Mind what you are about, Coucou Peter, mind what you are about, or you may be seized for a thief, and thrown into prison!’ The repeated warning of this interior voice made me feel low-spirited, and every moment I fancied the police were close at my heels. Fair-time was over, winter was coming on.

One day the snow was beginning to fall, I put my violin under my arm, and in spite of the entreaties of Nightingale, Pfifer-Karl, and the whole band, who wished me to remain with them, I went back to Saverne."

Mathéus said no more, but he withdrew his good opinion of the gipsies, and even repented having eaten any of their potatoes.

The sun had risen, and threw a steady light between the mountains; it was time to be going, and Mathéus remounted Bruno.

Coucou Peter took hold of the bridle, and ascended the road leading up the hill, in order to escape from the mists which filled the valley.

The birds were warbling their joyous morning songs. The night faded away, and the air became more fresh and penetrating; the path from Haslaeh again became visible amongst the bushes, and Maitre Frantz, now more at his ease, congratulated his disciple on having parted company with the gipsies.

As they advanced into the forest, the sun became warmer, and penetrated beneath the foliage; and while Bruno, at a walking pace, followed the narrow moss-bordered path, Coucou Peter gathered ripe blackberries, with which the bushes were laden. His mouth was blackened with the fruit, and he whistled gaily in answer to the birds. Jays passed in flights among the underwood, and more than once the merry fiddler threw his stick at them, so near did they approach.

Until nine o'clock all went well; but when the full heat of day came, and the steep sides of the Dagsberg had to be ascended, an unconquerable melancholy fell upon the heart of Mathéus. They met not a soul;

nothing but the murmur of the pines was around them. The vast pasturages of the valleys, in which were heard the distant sound of the sheep-bell, and the song of the young shepherds—now faint, now shrill—awaking the echoes: everything reminded him of Graufthal, his old Martha, his absent friends; and heavy sighs arose from his bosom. Coucou Peter himself, contrary to his habit, was thoughtful, and Bruno hung his head, with a melancholy air, as if thinking regretfully of happier times.

Many times they had to stop to take breath, and it was not until towards five o'clock in the evening that they reached the Valley of the Zorn, at the foot of the Haut-Bârr. Then the sky cleared; above them wound the road from Lorraine; long lines of vehicles, peasant men and women, with their large panniers on their backs filled with vegetables, were passing along; cracking of whips and tinkling of harness-bells made the prospect pleasant, and seemed to announce the proximity of Zabern, the little town notable for its white bread, sausages, and foaming beer. They perceived it, in fact, at the outlet of the valley, and Bruno, scenting a resting-place, broke into a vigorous gallop. On reaching the first houses Mathéus slackened his pace.

“At length,” he said, “we have come to the end of our fatigues—the destinies are about to be accomplished!”

Thereupon Maître Frantz and his disciple proudly entered the ancient Rue des Tanneurs, and, to tell the truth, an extraordinary animation exhibited itself as they made their way along. Young and old faces showed themselves at all the windows, in cornettes, in

three-cornered hats, and in cotton caps ; everybody was curious to see them ; the habitués of the casino came out into the balcony, with billiard-cues or newspapers in their hands ; children returning from school, with their satchels at their back, followed them ; the geese themselves, walking about the streets and chatting amongst themselves on indifferent subjects, suddenly set up a cry of triumph, and flew right away to the Place de la Licorne.

“ You see, Coucou Peter,” said the illustrious philosopher, “ what a sensation our arrival produces ; everywhere we are received with fresh enthusiasm ! If the pastor will only lend us his temple for a day or two, we are sure of converting the whole town. The simplest course will then be to establish discussions, and invite all to make whatever objections may occur to them. Then from the height of the pulpit I will rebuke them in a voice of thunder, I will bemoan the aberrations of the age, I will strike with salutary terror the unbelievers, the sophists, and most of all the indifferents—those lepers of society, those worthless beings, who think of nothing, believe in nothing, and doubt even their own existence ! Oh, impure race !—race of vipers, given up to sensual enjoyments, you shall tremble ! Yes, you shall tremble at the voice of Frantz Mathéus, filled with real enthusiasm ; you shall be cast down with wholesome terror, and brought upon your knees before him ! But Frantz Mathéus is not cruel, and if you will only recognise the transformation of bodies and the peregrination of souls, if you will only allow faith to penetrate to the depths of your withered hearts, all shall be forgiven you !”

Notwithstanding his mental excitement, Maître

Frantz saw clearly what was going on around him ; the sight of men of the law in black robes, walking in front of the Courthouse, made him thoughtful ; and when on the Place de la Licorne, a kind of *sergent-de-ville*, in a large flap hat and with a stick under his arm, looked after them, the hare-like nature of the illustrious philosopher at once revealed itself, and he remembered that he had no passport. Fortunately they had reached the Rue des Capucins, and found themselves in front of the parsonage.

“Halt!” cried Coucou Peter ; “here’s our inn!”

“Heaven be thanked!” said Mathéus ; “we’ve had a long trot to-day.”

He alighted from the saddle, and Coucou Peter, without the least hesitation, led the horse to the stable.

At that moment the voice of the Pastor Schweitzer was heard inside the house, exclaiming—

“Twelve louis!—twelve louis! You have lost your senses, Salomon ; a thin cow, not even fresh in milk.”

“I’ve been offered as much for her, Monsieur Schweitzer.”

“Take it, then, take it, my boy—and thank you for giving me the preference.”

“Does the pastor deal in cattle?” asked Mathéus.

“He deals a little in everything,” replied Coucou Peter, smiling ; “he’s so worthy a man—you’ll see.”

They crossed the hall, and the discussion between the pastor and the Jew grew more animated.

“Let us split the difference,” said one.

“You’re making game of me,” cried the other ; “ten louis, not a centime more!”

Coucou Peter paused on the threshold, and Mathéus, looking over his disciple’s shoulder, saw one of those

lofty rooms of old times, ornamented with oak furniture, oak panelling, vast cupboards, massive tables, the sight of which rejoiced the heart. He instantly said : “Here they eat well, drink well, and sleep well!—the blessing of the Lord rest upon all good-natured people!”

A little fat man was seated on a leathern armchair, his stomach filling the whole space between his chin and his legs, and good-humour showing in his rosy face. Near him was standing a tall lout in a blouse, his nose hooked, and his hair a fiery red.

“Good day, pastor!” cried the fiddler.

The little man turned and burst into loud laughter.

“Coucou Peter!” he cried. “Ha! ha! ha! where does he come from? I should have said, ‘Where is he going?’—the rascal!”

And pushing back the armchair, he opened his arms and endeavoured to draw Coucou Peter to his fat stomach. It was something touching to see—something like two Easter-eggs trying to embrace one another; and it brought tears into Mathéus’ eyes to witness their endeavours. At length they gave up the attempt; and Coucou Peter, turning towards Mathéus, cried—

“Pastor, I bring you the illustrious Doctor Mathéus, the best man in the world and the greatest philosopher in the universe!”

“Welcome, welcome, monsieur!” said the Pastor Schweitzer, shaking Maître Frantz’s hand. “Be seated. I am delighted to make your acquaintance.”

He then sent the Jew away, and hurried to the kitchen, crying—

“Gredel! Gredel! here’s Coucou Peter!”

Gredel, who was getting supper ready, flew to the door of the sitting-room; three or four youngsters toddled

after her, shouting, chattering, and demanding slices of bread-and-jam.

“Good day, Gredel,” said Coucou Peter, kissing his wife on both cheeks ; “all goes well with you, my little Gredel ?”

“Yes, good-for-nothing, I’m quite well,” she replied, half laughingly, half seriously. “You’ve come back because you have not a sou left, I suppose ?”

“Come, come, Gredel, be reasonable ; I’m only on my way through this town ; it’s not worth making my life wretched.”

The children hung on to the tail of the fiddler’s coat, and called him “*Nonon* Coucou Peter,” to get something out of him ; and the pastor rubbed his hands merrily.

When Coucou Peter had completely cajoled his little wife, who was, after all, not so thin, and when he had kissed the children, one after the other, and whispered to them that his travelling-trunk was filled with nice things, Gredel returned to the kitchen ; and Coucou Peter, as well as the pastor and Mathéus, seated themselves before a bottle of old wolxheim.

The whole house wore a holiday aspect ; the children sang, whistled, and ran into the street to watch for the arrival of the promised travelling-trunk ; the fowls—the necks of which were wrung by Gredel—uttered piercing cries ; Coucou Peter gave an account of his distant peregrinations, of his title of “Grand Rabbi,” and of his future prospects ; the illustrious philosopher admired himself in the course of these marvellous tales ; the glasses were filled and emptied, as if by themselves ; and the fat stomach of Pastor Schweitzer shook merrily at the recital of the innumerable adventures of his old comrade.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha !—a good joke !” he cried ; “ you’ll never change, Coucou Peter !—you’ll never change ; nobody makes me laugh like you !”

Night had closed in, and the shadows of the neighbouring houses had spread themselves in the large sitting-room, when Gredel brought in lights. She was about to serve up the supper, and quickly spread a cloth upon the table, arranged the covers, and distributed the plates in proper order. Coucou Peter looked at her admiringly ; never had he seen her looking so fresh, plump, and attractive ; he was astonished at himself for not having before discovered all the merits of his wife, and, suddenly rising, as if transported with enthusiasm, he passed his arm round her waist, and began to waltz with her, crying—

“ Hey, Gredel ! hey !—off we go !”

“ Don’t play the fool !—don’t play the fool !” she cried.

But he paid no attention to what she said, and went on twirling her round and calling out—

“ Hey, Gredel ! off we go !” Finally, he gave her a sounding kiss on the neck, and exclaimed—

“ You are my little Gredel—always my good little Gredel—the prettiest little Gredel I have ever met with in my life !”

He then returned to his seat, gravely crossed his legs, and appeared greatly contented with himself for what he had done.

The children rushed in, crying—

“ Nonon Coucou Peter ; the trunk has not come !”

“ Hasn’t it ?” he said. “ That’s very strange—very strange ; but wait a bit longer, it’s sure to come, quite sure to come !”

These fair promises did not satisfy them ; but the

sight of some apple-fritters, tartlets, and hot galette, which Gredel was placing on the table, restored them to good temper. Before Mathéus and Coucou Peter had taken their places, they had seated themselves round the table, with napkins under their chins ; and when the party was arranged, and the minister in a solemn tone returned thanks to God for the many excellent things He had sent into the world for the use of His children, it was delightful to hear them all cry at once—“Amen !”

The supper passed gaily. Everybody had a good appetite. Gredel helped the children ; Coucou Peter filled the glasses, and proposed, first, the health of Maître Frantz—next, that of Pastor Schweitzer. The illustrious philosopher celebrated the peregrination of souls, and the pastor eulogised his progeny with tender benevolence. Fritz was going to be a minister ; he cared for nothing but the Bible ; he was a highly-intelligent child. Wilhelm promised to be admirably fitted for commerce ; and Ludwig could not fail to become a general, for he played on the fife from morning till night. Mathéus would not contradict the philosophical opinions of his host ; but he thought they all belonged, without exception, to the family of the penguins, remarkable for their short wings, large stomachs, and insatiable appetites.

It was a very gentle satisfaction for the illustrious philosopher to see his foresight confirmed on the arrival of the dessert ; these little ones then set to eating cream, cakes, and tarts with surprising avidity. Fritz cracked filberts ; Wilhelm crammed raisins into his pocket ; and little Ludwig drank Gredel’s wine every time she turned her head to smile at Coucou Peter.

At the end of the meal the pastor had his meerschaum brought him, and, while listening to the address of Maître Frantz, who was requesting the use of the temple for the purpose of announcing his doctrine, lit it; then, throwing himself back in his armchair, he blew a few puffs of smoke into the air, and with the utmost quietude of manner replied—

“ Illustrious philosopher! you are possessed by a truly affecting philosophic ardour, and it would be a real pleasure to me to be of service to you. But, as to the temple, it is not to be thought of; I cannot raise up against myself the antagonism of such irresistible eloquence as yours; that is too much to expect of human weakness. But, thank Heaven, we have a casino at Saverne—that is to say, a place of reunion for the élite of society: barristers, judges, procureurs, all well-informed persons, who will like nothing better than to listen to you and profit by your instruction. If you wish it——”

“ It is the Being of Beings Himself who has inspired you with the idea of conducting me to this place!” cried Mathéus, interrupting him. “ There is not a moment to be lost; the universe has too long trembled in doubt and uncertainty.”

“ Restrain your impatience, illustrious philosopher!” replied the pastor. “ In the first place, it will be as well to have your boots blacked. I know well that a superior mind does not trouble itself with such details, but polished boots can do no harm to your eloquence. Besides that, Gredel will give your coat a brush, so that you may conform to the oratorical decorum recommended by Cicero; by which time I hope to have finished my pipe, and we will set off.”

These judicious considerations decided Mathéus to moderate his impatience. Coucou Peter brought him the pastor's dressing-gown and slippers ; Gredel blacked his boots and brushed his brown coat ; Maître Frantz shaved himself, as he was used to do at Graufthal ; finally, having put on a clean shirt in an adjoining room, and completed all his preparations, the illustrious philosopher and the pastor took their way together towards the casino.

Coucou Peter, who stayed with Gredel, followed them to the door, candle in hand, and wished them all sorts of good-fortune.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In passing up the ancient Rue des Capucins, Maître Frantz felt a real enjoyment from having changed his shirt and shaved himself; his mind was filled with invincible arguments, and the moon in a manner went before him to conduct him to the casino.

A confused murmur announced that the little Chapel of Saint Jean was full of the faithful; no other sound was heard in the street; all the women were at worship, and all the men at the public-house.

Maître Frantz and the pastor proceeded for some time in silence, inhaling with pleasure the fresh evening air, so pleasant after a good meal; watching the rapid light that escapes from a door quickly opened and shut, a lantern moving in the midst of the darkness, a shadow appearing behind well-lighted window-panes—in short, those vague experiences of night so full of dreamy mystery and inexpressible charm; but, speedily animated by his anthropo-zoological meditation, the illustrious philosopher quickened his pace.

“Stay a moment, my dear monsieur—stay a moment,” said the pastor; “you run like a hare. Give me a moment to take breath.”

“Will all the company be assembled?” inquired Mathéus.

“Not yet—not yet; there’s no cause for hurrying.

What would be said if judges, barristers, and procureurs were to go to drink and play at midday? It wouldn't be respectable; they must wait until the public-houses are shut up, and set an example of good morals."

Thus spoke the pastor, which did not prevent *Maître Frantz Mathéus* from pressing forward with lengthened strides, under the impulsion of new enthusiasm, murmuring to himself—"Courage, Frantz! Listen not to the counsels of a false wisdom and of a cowardly love of repose; the captious windings of sophistry shall neither bewilder your intelligence nor hinder your triumphant march;"

The pastor laughed at his precipitation.

"Where are you rushing, my dear monsieur—where are you rushing?" he cried, on the doorstep of the casino. "'Don't you see where we are?'"

Looking about him, *Maître Frantz* observed tall windows shining in the midst of the darkness, with the figures of dancers flitting across their red curtains.

"It is here," he thought, "that the regeneration of mankind is about to be accomplished!"

He was greatly moved by this magnificent idea, but still greater was his emotion when, the pastor having opened the door, he beheld a large room illuminated by a great number of lights. A considerable number of persons were already assembled. Some were reading the newspapers; *Monsieur le Notaire Creutzer* was playing a game of piquet with *Monsieur l'Avocat Swibel*; the noble *Baron Pipelnaz*, thrown back in a large arm-chair, was gravely discussing the affairs of the country; and the young substitute *Papler* was chatting and laughing with handsome *Mademoiselle*

Olympia, the young lady at the refreshment counter. It was a superb sight, such as Maître Frantz could not remember to have seen for many years ; and when, passing by one of the gold-framed looking-glasses, he saw himself standing in the middle of the room in his brown overcoat, short breeches, and check waistcoat, he inwardly thanked the pastor for having caused his boots to be polished and his coat brushed.

The members of the casino had turned their heads and smiled at sight of the good man ; they took him for a peasant of Upper Alsace, who had lost his way amid superior spheres, and his air of admiration was pleasant to them to see ; but when the pastor handed him a seat, and ordered two glasses of beer, they thought it must be some village clergyman, and each returned to his former attitude.

The fair Olympia rang her bell, and the two glasses of beer were served upon a brilliantly-painted lacquered tray.

How astonished Mathéus must have been by such magnificence may be imagined ; globes of crystal covered the lamps, and the chairs were covered with velvet, soft as the fleece of young lambs. Thus it was that, in spite of his resolute convictions, he could not help feeling a sort of timidity, natural to those who find themselves in the presence of the great ones of the earth.

“ Well, illustrious philosopher, do you wish me to announce your discourse ? ” asked the gay-hearted pastor.

“ Not just yet,” replied Maître Frantz, almost in a whisper, while a blush suffused his venerable cheeks—“ not just yet. I have not quite prepared my exordium.”

“The deuce ! You’ll be some time about it. If you’ll allow me, I’ll look through this newspaper, and, when you are ready, you’ll only have to tell me.”

Mathéus nodded affirmatively, and drew from his pocket the Synopsis of his *Anthropo-Zoology*.

The good man was not wanting in prudence : on the contrary, his timid nature, in the course of its successive transformations, had accustomed itself to prick up its ears, and it might be said that, under certain circumstances, he slept with his eyes open. Therefore, all the while he was looking over the Synopsis, he closely watched all that was passing in the room, and even listened attentively to what was being said right and left.

New faces appeared every moment : now Monsieur Stoffel, the tax-collector, with his double gold chain and trinkets ; now Hospos, the chemist, whose loud voice was heard out in the entrance-hall ; now Monsieur Seypel, the Garde Général, all the seams of his coat embroidered with silver. All these gentlemen stopped for a moment at the bar, and addressed a few sprightly speeches to the fair Olympia, who tossed her head and smiled with infinite grace. They then seated themselves and called for newspapers.

The conversation grew more animated, and turned upon the ball to be given by Madame la Sous-Préfète, the names of persons who were to be present being mentioned. It was to be a grand entertainment for the wind-up of the season. A pâté de Strasbourg had been sent for. Monsieur le Garde Général smiled significantly. When partridges and quails were mentioned to him, he neither said “Yes” nor “No.” Then came confidences. Cards of invitation were drawn from waistcoat-pockets !

“Ah! you are going, my dear fellow! I’m delighted!”

“And you too!”

Congratulations were exchanged. But what completed the general satisfaction was to learn from the noble Baron Pipelnaz the approaching arrival of Monsieur le Préfet, of the Council of Revision. A thousand secret connections between this journey and Madame la Sous-Préfète’s ball were discovered. There was no doubt whatever that Monsieur le Préfet intended to be at the ball. What an event! All those who were invited looked at each other in a sort of ecstasy. To be at the same ball as Monsieur le Préfet! To take supper at the same table as Monsieur le Préfet!

Those who had not yet received their cards of invitation continued their play, exclaiming, “Three kings! three aces!” very loudly, and as if they had heard nothing of the conversation. The pastor himself appeared very grave, and read his newspaper with sustained attention; but they could not conceal their discomfiture, which was clearly to be read in their faces. They were deeply mortified, and greatly to be commiserated.

Small parties of intimate friends were formed to drink punch and mulled wine. Nothing was talked of on all sides but the grace of Madame la Sous-Préfète and the incomparable elegance of her suppers. The noble Baron Pipelnaz, mayor of the town, enlarged on the reception he intended to give Monsieur le Préfet. For twenty years Monsieur le Baron had bowed to him at the door of the Mairie; but, under circumstances so flattering, he proposed to go and meet him in full official costume, and even desired to present to him a short congratulatory address.

The arrival of the Procureur Kitzig interrupted this agreeable conversation. He was one of Pastor Schweitzer's old comrades of the University of Strasbourg, and every day they played together a game of "Youker." Fashionable society laughed at the vulgar manners of Procureur Kitzig, who did not know how properly to keep up his rank, and talked familiarly with anybody he happened to meet. Nobody ventured to do this to his face, however. Maître Kitzig occupied a high position at Saverne. Besides, who could be sure that at some time or other he might not have some little business or other with Monsieur le Procureur? Everybody, therefore, smiled on Monsieur le Procureur, who replied by a nod or a few significant words.

"You are very good, Monsieur le Procureur. You are too kind, Monsieur le Procureur."

"Ha! ha! ha! What a farce!" whispered the pastor in Mathéus's ear; "what a farce! Have you ever seen anything like it at Graufthal?"

But the illustrious philosopher made no answer. He had recognised in Maître Kitzig an individual of the canine race, for whom hares feel a very singular veneration.

At the end of a few moments Monsieur le Procureur joined his friend Schweitzer, shook hands with him, and bowed to Mathéus.

"Well, Karl," he said, seating himself, "shall we have our game of 'Youker' this evening? I shall be glad of it."

"I'm ready, Michel."

"Imagine," Maître Kitzig went on—"I've done nothing since five o'clock but listen to witnesses, and God knows if others may not be coming from the fair!"

“From the fair at Haslach?” asked the pastor, looking at Mathéus.

“Yes; pretty things have been going on there. Two scoundrels have been disturbing the population from top to bottom by their incendiary preaching. They have attacked laws, morals, and religion—even performed miracles! It’s a Court of Assize affair.”

“And if they fall into the hands of justice?”

“They won’t get out of my hands for less than twenty years at the galleys,” replied Kitzig, absorbing a pinch of snuff with the utmost indifference. “But we’ve nothing to do with that just now. Cards—and a slate!”

Never had Frantz Mathéus found himself in so terrible a position. His first impulse was to denounce himself, and to defend the doctrine in the face of nations; but at this idea his hair rose on the nape of his neck. He looked towards the door, and remained motionless.

On his side the pastor was not too much at ease. However, he had presence of mind enough to say—

“Allow me to present to you Doctor Mathéus, of Graufthal, returning from the Scientific Congress at Bâle.”

“Ah!” said the procureur, shuffling the cards. “On his way back to Graufthal—he must have passed through Haslach, then?”

Maître Frantz thought he should have fallen backwards; but fortunately his tongue, so to speak, rejoined of its own accord—

“Pardon me, Monsieur le Procureur,” he said—“I came by way of Molsheim.”

“Ah! that’s vexatious; we might have got some useful information from you,” said Maître Kitzig.

He then dealt the cards, and the game began.

What a position for Maître Frantz! at the moment of gaining the most magnificent oratorical triumph, and of proclaiming the system, to be obliged to remain silent—of denying the doctrine—of concealing himself like a criminal! For the more he thought of giving himself up, the more his natural instincts opposed themselves to such a course, and in his trouble he cried—

“ O poor Mathéus!—poor Mathéus!—to what extremities are you reduced! To go to the galleys at your time of life!—poor Mathéus! What fault of yours can have merited so sad a fate? Have you not sacrificed your repose, your dearest affections, for the happiness of humankind? Poor Mathéus!”

His heart wept, and his whole being trembled; but he had not strength enough to give himself up: he was afraid.

When, after the first hand had been played, Maître Kitzig said to him, absently, that he must necessarily have passed through Haslach, as the road from Molsheim passed immediately behind that village, he denied it afresh—denied it emphatically; saying that he had passed at the back of Hirchland, and giving a false description of the route and of the beauties of nature, describing an immense circuit around Oberbronn, Eschenbach, and generally of all the places through which he had passed.

“ You took a very long and roundabout road?” remarked the procureur; the game then went on without interruption.

From time to time Maître Kitzig made some caustic reflection as to the difficulty of mountain roads, as to the danger of preaching new doctrines, and the illus-

trious philosopher trembled to the marrow of his bones. Thus passed this evening, which was to have decided the eternal glory of Frantz Mathéus, of the progress of civilisation, and of the happiness of future races ; it passed in the cruellest of torments. While joy was all around the good man, while the noble Baron de Pipelnaz was blooming in his pride, and all these vulgar beings were lapping themselves in the most radiant hopes : he, so good, so just, so benevolent, was thinking of nothing but of flight—of going and enriching America with the treasures of his science ! “There,” he thought, “doctrines are free ; no procureurs or gendarmes are to be feared ; everybody may perform miracles as they like !”

Midnight struck, and a goodly number of the habitués of the casino had already retired, when the Procureur Kitzig rose, and, looking at the illustrious philosopher, said—

“Surely, my dear monsieur, you have made a mistake ; you *must* have come into the road at the back of Haslach, and passed through the village ?”

Frantz Mathéus, as if carried away by anger, declared for the third time, with an oath, that he did not know what was meant—that he had never been that way !

His emotion would certainly have betrayed him if he had not had the most honest face in the world. But how could it be supposed that this good Daddy Mathéus, Doctor of Graufthal, was that terrible reformer, that great offender, who had conceived the audacious design of shaking the universe ? Such an idea could not have come into any one’s head ; so Maître Kitzig contented himself with laughing at the worthy man’s singular excitement, and wishing him “Good evening.”

The pastor and Maître Frantz were the last to leave, and when they were in the street, the Doctor, feeling the full force of his weakness, burst into tears. In vain did Monsieur Schweitzer seek to console him with kind words—he could not forgive himself; and if his host had not supported him, he would not have been able to move a step, so choked was he by emotion, so much did he tremble in all his limbs.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN Frantz Mathéus and the pastor reached the house, everybody there was asleep. The pastor, leaving Mathéus at the door of the sitting-room, went into the kitchen, and returned after a few minutes with a light.

Calmness had succeeded the good man's agitation ; he mechanically followed his host, who conducted him to a little bedroom on the first-floor, looking into the parsonage garden.

The tops of the trees beat gently against the windows ; the linen on the bed was of surprising whiteness ; and the old oaken furniture seemed to welcome him with an air of naïve familiarity. But, in his sadness, the illustrious philosopher remarked none of these details, but sat down, uttering a profound sigh.

“ Come, my dear monsieur,” said the pastor, “ forget the little annoyances of the philosophical career ; have a good sleep, and to-morrow you will be as fresh and active as if you had achieved the most magnificent victory.”

He shook Maître’s Frantz’s hand, placed the candle on the table, and then went quietly to rest after his fatigues.

When the pastor’s steps could no longer be heard, and the silence of night reigned throughout the house, Mathéus, with his elbows resting on the table and his

head between his hands, sat watching the burning of the candle with an indescribably downcast air ; he was thinking of nothing, and yet he was sad—sad as if the Great Demiourgos had abandoned him !

About one o'clock he heard a child crying in a neighbouring house, and the mother trying to hush it with tender words. That child-voice, so weak and soft—that mother's voice, more gentle still—touched the good man's heart, and a tear moistened his eyes. The child being at length appeased, the silence became more profound, and *Maître Frantz*, overcome by fatigue, ended by falling asleep with his forehead on the table.

When he awoke, daylight was beginning to show itself at the windows, and the candle was flaring in a red flame from the hollow of the candlestick. All the events of the night then returned to his memory. He rose and opened the window.

The birds were already warbling in the garden ; some labourers, with pickaxe on shoulder, chatted as they passed the gate, their voices, at this early hour, being heard from one end of the street to the other. Milk-sellers from Dagsberg, with their large tin cans under their arms, were sitting about on neighbouring posts, and servants, short-petticoated and bare-armed, were coming one by one to buy milk for their houses. All these worthy people had a look of health pleasant to see. The servant-girls stopped to gossip about christenings, marriages, and the departure of the conscripts ; and the tradespeople opened their shops and hung out their goods at their doors. Some fresh event happened every moment ; then the mountain-air came down so fresh and pure, that the chest expanded with pleasure, and, as it were, breathed by itself.

Maître Frantz, inspirited by this cheerful sight, began to see things from a more agreeable point of view; he was, in fact, astonished at himself for his groundless fears, for no one could possibly forbid him to teach a doctrine founded on the highest morality and the soundest logic. A very little was needed to make him seriously determined to denounce himself to the procureur; but his prudence showed him that he might, in the first place, be shut up in prison, pending inquiry into the doctrine, and this judicious reflection cooled his enthusiasm. "Frantz Mathéus," he said to himself, "you are possessed of too great a psychological ardour. Doubtless it would be delightful to suffer persecution and martyrdom for immutable truth; it would be *very* delightful—but what end would it serve? If you are put in prison, who will preach anthropo-zoology to the human race? It could not be done by Coucou Peter, a man with little faith, and naturally inclined to the enjoyments of the flesh. It will be better for you to go—it is wisdom that directs you! Above all, Frantz, be on your guard against your extraordinary audacity—true courage consists in conquering one's passions!"

When the illustrious philosopher had come to this moral understanding with himself, he resolved to set off at once to Strasbourg without a moment's loss of time. Consequently he put on his wide-brimmed hat and descended on tiptoe to the hall. But, as he was passing the door of a small room under the stairs, and hesitated for an instant, not knowing whether to turn to right or left, the voice of his disciple called to him from the interior—

"Who's there?"

"It is I, my friend."

“Ah! is it you, Doctor?”

At the same time, Mathéus heard some one get out of bed, and Coucou Peter, in his shirt, appeared on the threshold.

“What the deuce are you doing about so early?” cried the merry fiddler.

“There’s good reason for it,” Mathéus replied. “You do not know what I learned yesterday, at the casino—that we are being pursued!”

“Pursued!” cried Coucou Peter, pushing back his nightcap on to the nape of his neck; “pursued—by whom?”

“By the gendarmes.”

“For what?”

“For preaching the doctrine.”

“The doctrine! Ah, the scoundrels! I see how it is: they’re afraid of losing their places; because if we were the masters, it is we who would be the rabbis.”

“That’s it! They threaten us with the galleys.”

Coucou Peter stood with wide-open eyes and mouth. At the same time a voice, from the depths of the room, cried—

“In Heaven’s name, save yourself, Peter!—fly!”

“Don’t be alarmed, Gredel—don’t be alarmed,” said the fiddler. “Poor little woman, how she loves me! We’ll be off at once. The galleys! Ah, the rascals!—Where shall we go, Maître Frantz?”

“To Strasbourg.”

“Yes, let’s go to Strasbourg. Gredel, get up and make us some breakfast. Go back to your room, Maître Frantz; in five minutes I shall be ready.”

The illustrious philosopher returned to his chamber,

and Coucou Peter shortly rejoined him, buttoning on his braces.

“ My wife is already in the kitchen, Maître Frantz,” he said ; “ I’ll go and saddle Bruno, and in less than an hour we shall be off.”

Mathéus, however, returned in the course of a few minutes, to tell him what had passed on the previous night. Coucou Peter learned with pleasure that they were being sought in the neighbourhood of Haslach.

“ Good !” he said—“ good ! We need not be in a hurry, but may get our breakfast quietly.”

Together they went down into the kitchen, and found Gredel cooking steaks on the gridiron and preparing the coffee.

The grey hues of morning were spreading through the kitchen, the fire crackled, thousands of glittering sparks flew up the black chimney, and Maître Frantz sat gravely contemplating the scene and thinking of Graufthal.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, Coucou Peter returned and reported that Bruno had eaten his feed of oats with visible satisfaction. Then, turning to his wife, “ Give me your best knife, Gredel,” he said ; “ I want it.”

“ What do you want with it ?” she asked.

“ You’ll see—you’ll see presently.”

As soon as he had got the knife, he raised himself upon the hearth, and seizing a smoked sausage, as thick as his arm, hanging in the chimney, cut it in two ; he then did the same with a ham, and appeared highly satisfied with his labour.

“ If we are forced to take to the woods, Maître

Frantz," he said, "we'll not be driven to eat mast like Saint Antoine."

"Ah! it's not you, you rogue, who will ever die of hunger!" cried his wife; "you'd pawn your breeches first!"

"How well you know me, Gredel!—how well you know me!" cried the gay fiddler, kissing her affectionately.

He then went out to put his provisions in a haversack.

"Is it really true, Doctor," asked Gredel, as soon as he was out of hearing, "that you wish to make him Chief Rabbi of the peregrination of souls? The fact is, he has told me so many stories, that I can't now believe anything he says."

"Yes, my child, it is true," said the good man; "your husband, notwithstanding his gay humour and natural lightness of character, has a good heart; I am fond of him, and he will succeed me in the government of souls."

"Oh!" she cried, "I know that he's a good fellow, and an honest one; but he is so light—he's given me a deal of uneasiness, the rascal! I can't help loving him, all the same; for he has his good side, if one can only get at it."

"Well said—well said, my child!" said Mathéus, touched by Gredel's naïve answer; "Coucou Peter will yet do you honour; he will be spoken of in distant ages."

Proud at hearing this, Gredel hastened to lay the cloth in the dining-room, and Coucou Peter having again come in, they made a hearty breakfast of bread-and-butter, coffee, and steaks. Monsieur Schweitzer,

hearing the clatter of glasses, came down hurriedly in his breeches, and, seeing the party at table, burst into a loud fit of laughter.

“Very good!—very good!” he cried. “I’m glad to see you are quite yourself again!”

Maître Frantz at once explained to him his approaching departure.

“Well, my dear monsieur,” said the pastor, seating himself, “in spite of the great pleasure I should have felt in keeping you longer here, I cannot but approve your prudence. Kitzig would be sure to find you out, and all his affection for me would not prevent your being involved in a most unpleasant piece of business. Things being so, let us have a glass together. Gredel, here is the key of the little cellar; bring a bottle from under the firewood.”

Every one ate and drank with a good appetite. Maître Frantz was sorry to leave such worthy people; but, about six, the time had come to separate. The good man embraced the pastor; Coucou Peter kissed his wife, who shed tears at parting with the rascal. They were conducted to the yard, where Bruno was in waiting. Mathéus being mounted, the Pastor Schweitzer shook him warmly by the hand, and Gredel could not detach herself from Coucou Peter’s neck. At length they departed, amid the blessings and good wishes of the whole family.

CHAPTER XX.

MAITRE FRANTZ and his disciple passed quickly through the town. The little houses scattered along the roadsides rapidly succeeded one another, with their barns, stables, and wooden steps with washing hanging upon them—ruddy-faced children asked alms, and old inquisitive women put their nodding heads out of the upper windows. At the end of a quarter of an hour they were in the country, breathing the free air, passing between two rows of chestnut-trees, listening to the song of the birds, and thinking still of the worthy Pastor Schweitzer, by whom they had been so well received—of soft-hearted little Gredel, who had wept so freely at seeing them depart.

When the smoky roofs of Saverne and the weather-cock of the church had disappeared behind the mountain, Coucou Peter at length shook off the deep reverie in which he had been indulging, and after two or three times clearing his voice, he gravely chanted the old ballad of ‘The Count of Geroldsek’; the yellow dwarf keeping watch on the highest tower, the deliverance of the fair Itha, held captive at Haut-Bârr. There was something melancholy in Coucou Peter’s voice, for he was thinking of his little Gredel. Bruno’s step was in cadence; and to the mind of Mathéus, listening to this old language, returned dim and vague memories.

After the last verse Coucou Peter took breath, and cried—

“ What a jolly life these Counts of Geroldsek led!—going about the mountain, carrying off girls, fighting husbands—drinking, singing, feasting, from morning till night! What a glorious existence! The king himself wasn’t fit to be their cousin !”

“ Doubtless—doubtless, the Counts of Geroldsek were great and powerful nobles,” replied Mathéus. “ Their authority extended from the county of Bârr to Sûngau, and from Lower Mundat to Bassigny, in Champagne; the richest jewels, the most beautiful arms, the most magnificent hangings, belonged to their sumptuous castles in Alsace and Lorraine; the most exquisite wines filled their cellars, numerous knights rode under their banners, crowds of gentlemen and valets attended upon them in their courts—some monks also, whom they held in great esteem. Unfortunately, instead of practising anthropo-zoological virtues, these noble personages destroyed travellers on the highway; and the Being of Beings, weary of their rapine, has made them descend in the rank of animals.”

“ Ah !” cried Coucou Peter, laughing, “ it seems to me that I must once have been one of those good monks you have just been speaking about. I must try and find out, the first time I go by Geroldsek.”

“ How do you mean to do that ?”

“ I shall go up to the castle, and if ever I have been one of those good monks, I shall find out the road to the cellar at once.”

While deplored the sensual tendencies of his disciple, Mathéus inwardly laughed at his gay humour. “ One cannot be perfect,” he said to himself. “ This poor

Coucou Peter thinks only of satisfying his physical appetites ; but he is so good a fellow that the Great Demiourgos will not be offended with him ; he will even laugh, I think, at the idea of the monk and his proof of the cellar of Geroldsek !” And the illustrious philosopher shook his head, as much as to say, “ He’ll never change ! He’ll never change !”

Chatting in this manner, they made their way quietly along by the Zorn. For more than an hour they had kept to the other side of the road, so as to be within the shade of the trees, for the sun was high, and the heat overpowering. As far as the eye could reach nothing was to be seen on the immense plain of Alsace but waving fields of rye, wheat, and oats ; the hot air was laden with the scent of long grass. But the eye turned involuntarily towards the river, under the shadow of the old willows dipping their long branches in the water, and the thought arose, of what delight it would be to bathe in the fresh and limpid waves !

Towards noon, Frantz Mathéus and his disciple halted near a spring surrounded with alders, at a little distance off the road. They unsaddled Bruno. Coucou Peter put his flask of wolxheim to cool in the spring ; he then produced the provisions from his haversack, and lay down beside his master, between two ridges of oats, which completely sheltered them from the heat of the day.

It is a delicious sensation, after the fatigue and dust of the road, to rest in the shade, to hear the gush of water through the grass, to watch the thousands of insects passing above one’s head in joyous caravans, and to feel the great golden heads of the corn rustling about one.

Bruno browsed along the hedge ; Coucou Peter raised

himself upon his elbow with indescribable satisfaction, clicked his tongue, and now and then presented the flask to Mathéus ; but it was only for form's sake, for the illustrious philosopher preferred spring-water to the best wine, especially during such heat. At last the gay fiddler finished his meal, closed his pocket-knife, and cried with a satisfied air—

“ All goes well, Maître Frantz ; it is clear the Great Demiourgos protects us—clear as day ! We're far from Saverne ; and if that beggar of a procureur lays hold of us now, I'll consent to be hanged at once. Let us now take a last pull at the flask, and get on our way ; for if we arrive too late, the gates of the city will be closed.”

Saying that, he replaced his haversack, presented the bridle to Matbéus, and the illustrious philosopher having bestridden Bruno, they went forward, full of courage and confidence. The great heat was passed, the shadow of the neighbouring hills began to stretch across the road, and the Rhine breeze to refresh the air.

At every village, however, Coucou Peter remembered that he had still three francs left of the thirty given him by Dame Thérèse, and made a visit to the nearest wine-shop. Everywhere he fell in with acquaintances, and found a pretext for offering or accepting a bottle. But it was in vain that he begged his master to enter the public-houses ; for Mathéus, seeing that in this manner they could never get to the end of their destination, remained on horseback at the door, in the midst of a circle of peasants who collected to look at him. The most he would do was to accept a glass through the window, in token of good-fellowship with the numerous friends of his disciple.

At length, towards evening, they came in sight of the

ancient city of Strasbourg. Great animation had already exhibited itself on their passage ; every moment they met carriages, waggoners leading their horses by the bridle, customs officers, armed with their sharp iron probe, pricking packages, and diligences filled with conscripts.

A crowd of lights appeared in the distance, and repeated themselves in the dark stream of the Ile. But when they had made their way across the bridge, and through the crowded and noisy corps de garde, and the winding outworks ; when they had penetrated into the city, with its old houses, their fronts falling into decay, their thousand windows gleaming in the light of the hanging lamps ; its silk-mercers and sweetstuff-shops and library illuminated as if by magic-lanterns ; street-doors blocked up with merchandise, tortuous alleys hiding away in the darkness ; when all these objects met their view, what tenderly affecting thoughts returned to the good Doctor's memory !

Here he had spent the happiest years of his youth ; here was the Heron beer-house where every evening, on leaving the medical lecture-room, he came to smoke his pipe and take a pint of beer in company with Ludwig, Conrad, Bastien, and many other joyous comrades. There it was that the seignor perorated gravely in the midst of his subject Burchen ; that the pretty waitresses moved about them, laughing with one, replying with a wink to another, and answering the orders of their mistress with, " Coming directly, madame." Ah, happy days, how far off now ! What has become of you, Conrad, Wilhelm, Ludwig, brave drinkers that you were ?—what has become of you these forty years ? And you, Gretchen, Rosa, Charlotte, what has become of you ?—

you, so fresh, so graceful, so active, who used to worry little Frantz, sitting always so grave at the corner of the table, smoking calmly and sipping his beer, with his eyes raised to the ceiling, dreaming already, perhaps, of his sublime anthropo-zoological discoveries ? What has become of you, youth, grace, beauty, life without care, and with unbounded hope ? Ah, you are far, far off ! And you, poor Mathéus ! have grown old ; your locks are grey, you have nothing left but your system to sustain you.

Thus the good man meditated, his heart beating, and the crowd, the vehicles, the shops, and edifices about him having no power to draw him from his recollections.

Sometimes, however, the aspect of the spot he was passing changed the current of his melancholy musing : there, by the custom-house, under the roof of that high house, reflected in the Ile, and looking down upon the passing boats, was his garret-chamber ; his little ink-stained deal table, his bed hung with blue curtains in the recess, and he, Frantz Mathéus, young, with his elbows on an ancient folio spread before a solitary candle, studying the principles of the learned Paracelsus, who places the soul in the stomach ; of the profound La Caze, who fixes it in the tendonous centre of the diaphragm ; of the judicious Ernest Platner, who makes it drawn in with the atmosphere by the lungs ; of the sublime Descartes, who incloses it in the pineal gland—of all those great masters of human thoughts. Yes, he again saw all this, and smiled gently ; for since then how many precious facts, how many learned discoveries, had been stored in his mind !

“ Ah ! ” he said to himself, “ if the body exhausts itself and becomes feeble, the intelligence develops

itself every day. Eternal youth of the soul, which cannot grow old, and completes itself by successive transformations!"

Still farther on was the dwelling of Louise—of good, innocent Louise—who span, singing a simple air, while he, Mathéus, seated on a stool at her feet, gazed on her for entire hours, murmuring, "Louise, do you truly love me?" And she would answer, "You know well, Frantz, that I love you." Oh, sweet memories! can all have been but a dream?

The good man gave himself up to the charm of these distant recollections; he seemed still to be hearing Louise's spinning-wheel humming in the silence, when the voice of Coucou Peter scattered his charming illusions.

"Where are you going, Maître Frantz?" he asked.

"Where duty calls us," replied Mathéus.

"Yes, but to what place?"

"To wherever is most proper for the propagation of the doctrine."

They had reached the Rue des Arcades, and halted under a lamp.

"Are you not hungry, Maître Frantz?" inquired Coucou Peter.

"Slightly, my friend."

"Like me," said the disciple, scratching his ear; "the Great Demiourgos ought to send us a supper."

Mathéus looked at Coucou Peter; he had not in the least the appearance of jesting, and this fact made Mathéus himself very serious.

For more than a quarter of an hour they watched the people passing through the arcades—sellers crying their wares, pretty girls stopping at the shop-windows,

students jingling their spurs on the pavement and smacking their riding-whips, grave professors making their way through the crowd, with packets of books under their arms.

At length Coucou Peter said—

“I think, Maître Frantz, the Being of Beings has forgotten us at the present moment. By my faith, we should do no harm to go and earn a few sous in the beershops, instead of waiting till He sends us a supper. If you knew how to sing, I should say come in with me; but as it is, I'll go in alone, and you can wait for me at the door.”

This proposition appeared very humiliating to Mathéus, but not knowing what answer to make, he resigned himself, and followed his disciple, who went up the Grande Rue and took his violin out of its bag.

Nothing could be sadder to see than the good Doctor going from public-house to public-house, and watching through the window his disciple dancing sometimes on one leg, sometimes on the other, to support the doctrine. He was obliged to remind himself of his high mission, and say to himself that the Being of Beings wished to test his courage before raising him to the highest experience of glory; he did not fail to despise the rich warehouses, the magnificent displays, the luxury and opulence about him, crying to himself—

“Vanitas vanitatum, est omnia vanitas! Your pride is but as dust, O great ones of the earth! You will pass away like shadows, and be as if you had never been!”

All these sublime truths served very little purpose; and, to add to the distress, Bruno was strongly inclined to enter every inn he came to.

They stopped before more than twenty taverns, and towards nine o'clock Coucou Peter had yet but five sous in his pocket.

“Doctor,” he said, “things are going wrong ; here are three sous, if you like to take a glass ; for myself, I shall go and buy a loaf, for my stomach is getting emptier every moment.”

“Thanks, Coucou Peter—thanks !” replied the good man, very sadly. “I am not thirsty ; but listen to me. I recollect now that Georges Müller, the landlord of the Heron hotel, made me promise never to put up at any other house than his. It was on the last day of our Fuchcommerce, our studies being finished. Georges Müller, seeing that my comrades and I had paid up all our debts, shook us by the hand, and offered us his hotel if by chance any of us returned to Strasbourg. The promise I remember as well as if it had been given to-day, and it is my duty to keep my word.”

“How long ago was it ?” inquired Coucou Peter, his face lighting up with hope.

“Five-and-thirty years ago,” replied Mathéus, ingenuously.

“Five-and-thirty years !” cried Coucou Peter. “And do you imagine that Georges Müller is still there ?”

“No doubt. I observed his sign as I passed ; nothing has been changed.”

“Well, then, let us go to the Heron,” said the disciple, with a downcast air. “If there’s nothing to be gained there, there’s nothing to be lost ! May the Great Demiourgos come to our assistance !”

CHAPTER XXI.

NINE o'clock was striking at the Cathedral when Frantz Mathéus and his disciple stopped in front of the Heron brewery. The great yard, shaded by lime-trees, was full of company ; a troop of gipsies accompanied the tumult with their wild music. Kasper Müller, the brewer, in his shirt-sleeves, went from table to table, shaking hands and interchanging jocular greetings with the drinkers ; and all these figures, grave and comic, hidden in the shade, or distinctly seen in the uncertain light, presented a truly strange spectacle.

The illustrious philosopher, however, instead of giving himself up to his habitual reflections on the affinities of races, looked on all with a dull eye. It might have been said, to see him with outstretched neck and dangling legs, that he despaired of the doctrine, and of the future of the generations to come.

“Come, Maître Frantz,” said Coucou Peter to him, “courage ! Go into your friend Georges Müller’s house ; he can’t fail to recognise you—then, hurrah ! If we can only find a lodging for to-night, to-morrow we’ll convert the world !”

Mathéus obeyed mechanically ; he alighted, buttoned his brown greatcoat, and advanced with trembling steps into the yard, casting undecided glances at all the groups, and not knowing whom to address.

Presently Kasper Müller perceived him wandering

under the roofs like a troubled spirit ; the good man's face, stamped with sadness, interested him greatly. He came forward to meet him, and inquired what he needed.

"Monsieur," replied Mathéus, with a low bow, "will you have the kindness to tell me where I can find Georges Müller?"

"Georges Müller? He's been dead these fifteen years!"

"Good heavens! Is it possible to be more unfortunate than I am?" cried the good man, in a choking voice.

He bowed again, and was moving towards the gate ; but the brewer, touched by the sadness of this exclamation, detained him, and taking him aside, said, kindly—

"Excuse me, monsieur ; you appear to be in some pressing need. Can I not render you the service you expected of Georges Müller?"

"It is true," replied Mathéus, his eyes filling with tears, "I am in pressing want. I came to ask a lodging for the night of Georges Müller, one of my oldest and dearest acquaintances. Though I have not seen him for five-and-thirty years—the time at which I finished my studies—I am sure his heart had not changed, and that he would have given me a welcome."

"I have no doubt of it—I have no doubt of it," replied the brewer ; "and I, his son, will not refuse it to you, be sure of it."

"You the son of Georges Müller!" cried Mathéus. "You must be little Kasper, then, whom I have so often rocked on my knees! Ah! my dear child, how happy I am to see you again! I should not have recog-

nised you, with those big whiskers and that great ruddy face!"

Kasper could not help smiling at the doctor's simplicity ; but, seeing a crowd of drinkers gathering about them, he took him into the great dining-room, then empty, to ascertain more exactly the state of his affairs. Maître Frantz, without beating about the bush, informed him under what circumstances he had quitted Graufthal, and acquainted him with the innumerable vicissitudes of his anthropo-zoological peregrinations ; and Kasper Müller, familiarly placing his hands on the Doctor's shoulders, cried—

" You are a good and excellent man ! Does not your name appear on the registry of my birth ? "

" Doubtless," replied the illustrious philosopher ; " Maître Georges had me for a witness."

" Eh ! what need of further explanation is there ? " interrupted the brewer. " You will remain in my house to-night, that's understood. I'll have your horse taken to the stable, and send your disciple to you."

This said, he quitted Mathéus to go and give his orders.

Coucou Peter had scarcely rejoined the illustrious Doctor in the chief dining-room, before Charlotte, one of the servants of the house, came to inform them that all was ready. In spite of this agreeable news, Frantz Mathéus could not help feeling deeply melancholy. It seemed to him that the Great Demiourgos, instead of leaving him to have recourse to Georges Müller, might have given to him, himself, all things necessary to philosophic existence, the more as it was solely for his glory that he had left Graufthal without taking with him a single sou.

But Coucou Peter, surprised at finding such a good

resting-place, instead of having to sleep under the stars, was astonished at everything—at the size of the hotel, at the stairs, furnished with a handsome copper hand-rail, at the number of the rooms ; and when Charlotte conducted them into a neat room, and he saw on a round table the supper already smoking, including half a stuffed turkey, his gratitude expressed itself warmly. “ O Great Being !” he cried, “ Being of Beings ! now is manifested thy boundless power and infinite wisdom ! What a banquet for poor devils of philosophers, who expected to have to sleep in the street !”

He uttered these words in such an expressive tone of voice that Charlotte instantly conceived an affection for him ; but the illustrious Doctor made no reply, for he was truly downcast, and making sad reflections on the philosophic career.

Reflecting that the greatest philosopher of modern times, the successor of Pythagoras, of Philolaus, and all the sages of India and Egypt, the illustrious Frantz Mathéus of Graufthal, instead of being received by the population with enthusiasm, of being borne in triumph over roads strewn with palm, had run the risk of having to lie in the street and of dying of hunger, he became deeply melancholy, and while he ate, bitterly recapitulated in his mind the events of his journey ; the beating he had received at Oberbronn, Jacob Fischer’s attempt to seize Bruno, the threat of the Procureur of Saverne, and the proposition of Coucou Peter to go and sing in the beer-houses. This last circumstance above all wounded him to the depths of his soul, and every now and then large tears filled his eyes ; for he saw himself, like Belisarius, holding out his hand for charity at a street-corner.

Coucou Peter at first paid no attention to his distressed aspect ; but towards the end of the meal he perceived it, and cried, as he set down his glass—

“ What the deuce are you thinking of, Maître Mathéus ? I never saw you looking like this before ! ”

“ I am thinking,” replied the good man, “ that human kind is unworthy to know the sublime truths of anthropozoology. The peoples appear to me to be struck with a deplorable—and I must say wilful—blindness ; for if they are blind, it is because they choose to be so. In vain have we attempted to make them listen to the voice of justice. In vain have we tried by eloquence and persuasion to soften their hearts. In vain have we sacrificed our dearest affections, quitted the roof of our fathers, our friends, our—— ”

He was unable to finish ; his heart, swelled more and more by the enumeration of these calamities, ended by stifling his voice ; and, bowing his head upon the table, he burst into tears.

At that moment Kasper Müller, having shut up the brewery, for it was eleven o’clock, entered the room with a bottle of old wolsheim in each hand. He was struck by the sight of the Doctor’s distress.

“ Good heavens ! ” he said, stopping at the threshold, “ what has happened ? Here I was coming to clink glasses with an old friend of my father, and I find everybody down in the mouth ! ”

Coucou Peter gave up his seat to him, and told him the state of affairs.

“ Is that all ? ” cried Kasper Müller. “ Have you reached your age, my dear monsieur, without having learned what men are ? Why, if I were to weep at all the rascals to whom I have rendered services, and who

have repaid me with ingratitude, it would take me six months to do it! Come, come, cheer up! What the deuce! You are in the midst of good and trustworthy friends. Come, drink a cup of this old wolxheim—it will raise your spirits."

Speaking in this manner, he filled the glasses, and drank the illustrious philosopher's health. But Frantz Mathéus was too deeply affected to be so quickly consoled; in spite of the excellence of the wolxheim, in spite of the kind speeches of his host, and of Coucou Peter's encouragements, his soul remained oppressed by an undefined sadness. It was not until later, when Kasper Müller led the conversation on to the subject of the good old times, that he appeared to recover himself. With what delight the excellent old man retraced the physiognomies of the past, the simplicity of manners, the affectionate cordiality of the old inhabitants of Strasbourg, the simple and patriarchal family life! It became evident that all his affections, his whole soul, his whole heart, took refuge in that far-distant past.

Coucou Peter, with his elbow resting on the table, gravely smoked his pipe; Kasper Müller smiled at the good man's recitals; and Charlotte, seated behind the stove, fell asleep in spite of herself—her head bowing slowly, slowly, and then, at intervals, recovering itself with a jerk.

It was nearly one o'clock when Kasper Müller took leave of his guest, and Charlotte, half asleep, conducted Coucou Peter to a neighbouring chamber, and was able to get to rest after her fatigues.

Left alone, Maître Frantz raised the curtain of his window, and for some minutes contemplated the deserted

and silent streets of the city. The lamps were going out—the moon cast her pale light on the chimneys; an indescribable feeling of lonesomeness and sadness came upon his soul; he felt as if he were alone in the world! At length he went to bed, murmuring a prayer, and, having fallen asleep, the fair valley of Graufthal was brought back to him: he heard the rustling of the foliage, and the blackbird singing in the shady alleys of the pines. It was a beautiful dream!

CHAPTER XXII.

THE cries of the vegetable-sellers woke Frantz Mathéus at an early hour. The city was still covered with the Rhine mists, and heavy vehicles were rumbling over the pavements.

What a difference from his little village of Graufthal, so calm, so peaceful in its valley of pines!—where the vague murmur of the foliage, the carolling of the birds, and the merry chatting of neighbours on the thresholds of their little cottages, hardly disturbed its matutinal repose! How the least sighs, the smallest sounds, made themselves distinctly heard there, in the midst of the silence! How sweet it was to dream of the Great Demiourgos until good old Martha brought him his slippers!

Long did the illustrious philosopher, with his elbow on the pillow, picture to himself this domestic happiness; these tranquil mountain scenes, with their paths half hidden in the heather; the soft murmur of the Zinsel in its stony bed; the fisherman returning along the river's bank, his long rod and large net on his shoulder; the poacher, moist with dew, his short gun under his arm, returning at daybreak; the woodman in his smoky hut, his axe in his waistbelt. Jean-Claude Wachtmann himself, with his little three-cornered hat and large nose, then appeared to him a privileged being

of nature, enjoying immense—incalculable—happiness ! while he, poor exile, without hearth or home, repulsed on all sides, having not even a stone to rest his head upon, considered himself as the most unhappy, the most outcast, of all the beings in the world ! Ah ! if he had not that high mission to fulfil !—if he had not been predestined from the beginning of the ages for the destruction of sophistry and prejudice ! But this mission itself—what bitterness, what misfortune, what deception, had it not brought upon him ! Alas ! poor Mathéus ! how could he accomplish it ? Whither should he go on leaving the brewery ? What should he do on the evening of that very day ?

In the midst of these thoughts the good man dressed himself, and slowly descending the stairs went into the chief dining-room. When he entered the windows were all open, the servants sprinkling and sweeping the floor. Madame Müller was filling with fruit and slices of bread the little baskets of her children, before sending them to school. It was a scene of animation which almost made him forget the difficulties of converting the universe. Moreover, Kasper Müller and Coucou Peter, seated at one of the little tables in the room, greeted him gaily, and his spirits slightly rose.

“Good morning, my dear monsieur ! What sort of a night have you passed ?”

“ You are just in time for breakfast, Maître Frantz !”

“ Take a seat, Doctor. Catherine, this is the gentleman I told you of.”

“ Most happy to see you, monsieur, and to know you. My husband has told me so much that is good of you.”

It was thus that the Doctor was received. He was

pressed to take his seat at table, and Charlotte speedily appeared with two pots containing the coffee and hot milk.

On this occasion, the illustrious philosopher had once more to remark the sensual spirit of his disciple ; for as Charlotte poured out the coffee Coucou Peter cried—

“ Give me a great deal of coffee—I’ll tell you why.”

Mathéus made a sign to him to restrain his gluttony ; but that did not prevent him from calling out again—

“ Give me a great deal of milk—I’ll tell you why.”

“ Very well, monsieur—very well,” replied Charlotte, filling the cup up to the brim ; then placing the coffee-pots on the table, and waiting to hear Coucou Peter’s explanation.

“ Well, what are you waiting for, my dear ?” inquired the gay fiddler.

“ For you to tell me why you wanted a great deal of coffee and a great deal of milk.”

“ Ah !—it’s because I always put a great deal of sugar in my cup,” he replied.

Everybody laughed at this answer, and Mathéus did not venture to make any objection.

During breakfast, which passed gaily, the illustrious philosopher had no time to reflect on his future projects ; but towards the end of the meal, remembering that the time for departure was approaching, and still not knowing where to go, the good man’s face became again very serious.

Kasper Müller appeared to read to the bottom of his soul.

“ Doctor,” he said, “ you must make me a promise.”

“ Ah, my dear friend, anything in my power to do for you I will do with the greatest pleasure.”

“Very well; that’s understood, then. Now, listen to me. If you have to stay here longer, I beg that you will take advantage of my table and lodging.”

Maître Frantz made a gesture as if about to rise, but Kasper Müller, laying a hand upon his arm, said—

“Hear me out—you shall then answer me. A person more or less makes no difference in my house.”

“Nor two neither,” added Coucou Peter; “where there’s enough for three there’s enough for four.”

But Kasper Müller paid no attention to this remark, and went on—

“I have your promise. Now, if you were to consult me on your grand projects, I should tell you frankly, that, in your place, I should return to Graufthal.”

Maître Frantz looked at his host with moistened eyes, but made no reply. A great resolution was plainly struggling in his heart.

“I should go to Graufthal,” repeated Kasper Müller, forcibly: “in the first place, because I should be able to do more good there than anywhere else; in the next place, because men are not worth the trouble you are taking for them; they either do not, or will not, understand you, and God can always enlighten His children when it pleases Him to do so; and, finally, because, in your place, I should think I had earned the right of resting myself.”

Kasper Müller spoke in a firm tone; every word he uttered came from his heart. Maître Frantz became pale and red by turns. He hid his face between his two hands, and cried—

“Do you think I have done enough for human kind?—that posterity will not reproach me?—that I have fulfilled my duty?”

“ Done enough ! What philosopher can boast of having done as much as you ?—of having fulfilled his duties like you—of having sacrificed everything for his doctrine ? Come, my dear and worthy friend, shed no tears ; when a man has behaved as you have, he has nothing to weep for. The evidence of your own conscience is all that you can require to sustain you.”

These kind words softened Maître Frantz’s anguish ; his tears fell unchecked, as if they poured from a spring ; he felt vanquished by fortune, and the judicious advice of an honest man. But Coucou Peter, seeing that he was about to lose his place of Chief Rabbi, struck his fist and cried—

“ But *I* say, we are sure to conquer the universe ! The best moment isn’t the time to choose for throwing up the game. And the place of Chief Rabbi I was promised—for you did promise it to me, Maître Frantz, you can’t deny that !”

Mathéus made no reply ; he had neither strength nor courage to do so ; but Kasper Müller, laying his hand on the worthy fellow’s shoulder, said to him—

“ I have a place for you, comrade—a place that will suit you much better than that of Chief Rabbi. I have a place of cellarman vacant—forty francs a month, lodging, board, and the generosity of the customers. Eh ?—what say you ?”

The fat round face of Coucou Peter expanded with satisfaction.

“ Ah, Maître Kasper, you have a way of taking people on their weak side !”

“ You renounce the dignity of Chief Rabbi, then ?” cried the brewer.

“ Well—since Maître Frantz——”

“No, no! you must decide the question for yourself.”

“I faith, then,” cried Coucou Peter, rising, “long live the cellar! My proper place is there.”

As soon as his disciple had renounced the doctrine, the illustrious philosopher breathed more freely; and, raising his hands, he said—

“The Being of Beings has decided; His will be done!”

These were his only words of regret; for, with the thought that he should return to Graufthal, a joy as great as it was complete descended to the depths of his soul—a joy which no words can describe. As much ardour as he had felt in quitting his village, he now felt to return to it. The brewer’s wife joined with Kasper Müller in representing to him that he stood in need of one or two days’ rest; but that was a thing impossible.

“I must go,” he said, walking about the room; “I must go. Do not try to detain me, my dear lady; I should be distressed to refuse you anything. The destinies are accomplished! Coucou Peter, go and saddle Bruno; go, Coucou Peter, the sooner you do it the better. Ah, my dear friend, if you knew what a load you have taken from my breast! For the last two days I have hardly breathed; every step that took me farther from Graufthal has overwhelmed me with sadness. But I am going back!—thank Heaven, I am going back to it!”

Maître Kasper, seeing him so decided, attempted no further to dissuade him. He went out with Coucou Peter, and helped him to saddle the horse. Maître Frantz had followed and moved round them, unable to

conceal his impatience. At length, seeing that all was ready, the good man threw his arms warmly about Maître Kasper's neck, crying—

“O noble heart! worthy son of Georges Müller! I shall never forget the services you have rendered me. May the Being of Beings shed His blessings on you and on your family!”

He also embraced Dame Catherine, then Coucou Peter, who sobbed. At last he was setting foot in the stirrup, with singular briskness, when he felt the tail of his coat pulled, and at the same time Coucou Peter slipped something into his pocket.

“What are you doing, my friend?” asked Maître Frantz.

“Nothing, Doctor, nothing; only some earnest-money my new master has given me. Now that you are no longer a prophet you'll want money. But remember that your road is through Brumath, Wasselonne, and Saverne; you must stop at the Corne d'Abondance; and you must not let yourself be cheated by the landlords, Doctor—you are too good.”

During this discourse Mathéus observed his disciple with an air of inexpressible tenderness.

“Oh, Coucou Peter—Coucou Peter!” he cried, “what a man you would be if the unhappy instincts of the flesh had not such an empire over you! What goodness of heart! What natural simplicity! What a spirit of justice! You would be perfect!”

They once more embraced and wept anew.

At length the Doctor succeeded in getting into the saddle and rode away, repeating—

“May the Being of Beings recompense you all! May He shower his benefits upon you! Farewell!”

CHAPTER XXIII.

FRANTZ MATHEUS followed the directions of Coucou Peter, stopping at the different inns he had named on his route, and paying his way, as became a man who was no longer travelling in the interests of civilisation. He went by Wasselonne, Marmoutier, Saverne ; and the next day reached the plain of Falberg, which slopes towards Graufthal.

It was at the break of day that Maître Frantz descended the mountain ; the red cock of Christina Bauner was raising his morning cry, and the good man, at this well-known sound, wept with joy. Bruno went forward at a walking pace and neighed gently, as much as to say—

“ Monsieur, there’s your village ; don’t you recognise these little paths, these tall furze-bushes, these great trees ? And, down yonder, those thatched roofs, wet with the mist of the valley ? It’s your village ! Ah, monsieur ! how happy I am to see it again !”

And the good Doctor sobbed ; he had dropped the bridle on his horse’s neck and covered his face with his two hands, unable to restrain his tears. Then he moved them and gazed silently. The grey morning light, the white vapours, the moss-covered rocks, the shrubs, the odour of plants, the breeze—all spoke to his soul, and the nearer he approached the more he admired this

country. Everything appeared beautiful to him, as if he had seen it for the first time—friendly, as if he had passed a thousand existences with it.

“Dear Heaven,” he said, “how good you are, to allow me to see my country again—my beloved country! I did not know—in truth, I did not know—how much I loved this country; these trees, these cottages, the pretty Zinsel murmuring as it goes, the tall waving pines—I have never known till now—no, I have never known till now—how necessary all these are to my life!”

The narrow path widened, turned and returned, as if to show him all the beauty of the landscape, and conduct him gently to his dwelling-place. At the end of an hour he came into the sandy high road near the wooden bridge at the beginning of the village. Bruno’s hoofs sounded on the bridge, and the excellent beast neighed in a louder tone.

Graufthal was still sleeping; only the red cock of Christina Bauner redoubled his crowing. Mathéus looked at the little windows, the wide hanging roofs, the skylights stuffed with wisps of straw, the gratings of the cellars. What an agreeable freshness came from the river! New life already circulated in the good man’s veins. At last, he was before his own door; he alighted, cast a glance through the palings of his little garden, and saw the dew pearlizing the magnificent heads of his cabbages. How fresh, calm, and silent was everything!

He tapped on the window-shutter—waited. Bruno neighed. What would be the result? He listened; somebody was crossing the room—the shutter-bar was raised—the heart of Maître Frantz galloped! The

shutter was pushed open—and Martha—good old Martha—in her nightcap, leaned out.

“Ah, good heavens! It’s the Doctor! Ah!—is it possible?”

And quickly—very quickly—the good woman hastened to open the door.

Mathéus, seated on the bench by the door of his cottage, wept like the Prodigal Son.

THE END.

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